

Of God's Giving the Law on Mt. Sinai as a Covenant, and that of Faith

Francis Roberts

1657

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The Mystery and Marrow of the Bible: God's Covenants with Man

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Introduction

Rev. Travis Fentiman¹

The English puritan, Francis Roberts (1609-1675),² wrote the 1,700 page *magnum opus* on Covenant theology: *The Mystery and Marrow of the Bible: God's Covenant with Man* (London, 1657). Roberts understood covenant theology to comprise the marrow, or heart, of the Bible. Of special interest today, in light of revived and ongoing debates about how God's covenant with Moses may or may not be a covenant of works, is Roberts' 300+ page treatment of the Mosaic Law, being perhaps the most detailed and full, scriptural and theological discussion of the Mosaic Covenant from the Reformation and Puritan eras. The most relevant and important section of this larger portion is given here for the first time in a contemporary and easily readable edition.

Roberts opens his piece by arguing that the administration revealed through Moses was not a bare law only, as many people in his day took it to be (as well as in our own), but was a Covenant of fellowship. In the second section, 'What Law was Given as a Covenant at Mt. Sinai?', Roberts is at pains to show that at Mt. Sinai God did not give the moral law only, but also gave the judicial and ceremonial laws as well. The significance is that the Mosaic Covenant was not covenant of works of moral law only, simply and merely being a law to live by, but rather was a union of fellowship between God and Israel upon the larger terms of grace, specifically as the ceremonial law came with the provision of an atonement and the civil law showed God's care for Israel socially.

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² For a brief, popular introduction to the life of Roberts, see the blog article by R. Andrew Myers, '[God's Covenants](#)'. For a fuller, scholarly life of Roberts, see Won Taek Lim, *The Covenant Theology of Francis Roberts* (2000) pp. 29-37. Most of Roberts' works are available online at [PRDL](#) and [EEBO](#). Two of Roberts' works have been reprinted (as of 2016) and can be purchased through [Puritan Publications](#). Several short selections from Roberts' works have been newly edited and can be found at [Books and Articles Exclusive to ReformedBooksOnline](#), which is also a convenient place to find this document.

In the third section, 'Of What Sort and Manner of Covenant was this Mosaic Law?', Roberts outlines four views on the Mosaic Covenant that were held by some in his day, namely that the Mosaic Covenant was:

- (1) A straight covenant of works, differing in substance and in the way of salvation from the Covenant of Grace, as held by the four, eminent, Dutch, reformed Leiden professors in their influential textbook of Reformed theology (which is otherwise a standard of orthodoxy), *Synopsis of a Pure Theology*³ [Buy](#) (1625);
- (2) A Covenant mixed with works and grace, as held by some English predecessors of Roberts, and probably aimed by him at the influential Dutch Johannes Cocceius' theory of covenant abrogations;⁴
- (3) An independent, Subservient Covenant, serving a preparatory purpose to the further unfolding of the Covenant of Grace in the New Testament, as delineated by the Scot-born, French theological professor, John Cameron, many of the Amyraldians following, and others; and
- (4) That the Mosaic Covenant was 'in substance' the Covenant of Grace, uniting both the Old and New Testaments, though it differed in 'circumstance and manner of administration.' This latter view, according to Roberts, was the majority, Reformed view of his own day (see also its confessionalization in the [Westminster Confession of Faith, 7.6](#)).

Roberts spends the major share of his treatise critiquing the first three views. As many Christians today are of the first opinion, that the Mosaic Law was a covenant of works for salvation, Roberts' demonstration otherwise (on pp. 35-46 and 65-77 below) will be of great value showing that persons in the Old Testament were saved by grace through faith in Christ, who was portrayed throughout the Mosaic period in innumerable and diverse ways. Roberts' refutation of the first three opinions (pp. 36-62) will be helpful in seeing the continuity, in numerous and

³ For a brief view of the whole book, see Dr. Ryan McGraw's review on [Amazon](#). For their section on the Mosaic Covenant, read Disputation 23, 'On the Old and New Testament'. Roberts accurately represents their position. Their treatment is unfortunately brief and surprisingly unqualified.

⁴ Per Lim, [Covenant Theology](#), p. 232

marked detail, of God progressively revealing the same Covenant of Grace through the Old Testament, contrary to modern dispensationalism.

While some of the particularities of the first three viewpoints are not popularly held today (especially the specific and detailed constructions of Cocceius and Cameron), and hence Roberts cannot be said to have had the contemporary paradigms of our last several decades in view, yet the multitude of his arguments, it will be seen, if they do not apply directly to the contemporary competing paradigms, yet put them in the firing range. Roberts' discussion, even in these sometimes obscure points, is so full, insightful and instructive, that it cannot fail to be of great help in the contemporary discussion.

The fourth viewpoint is Roberts' own, that the Mosaic Covenant is not a covenant of works, but (in his own words) a 'Covenant of Faith'. This phrase, for Roberts, is synonymous with the Covenant of Grace,⁵ though emphasizes the necessity of, and prominence given to, faith in God's Covenant. For the Old Testament administration of the Covenant of Faith, Roberts uses the terminology of 'Covenant of Promise,' emphasizing its promissory aspect. For the New Testament administration of the Covenant of Faith, Roberts uses the term 'Covenant of Performance,' which emphasizes Christ's historical performing of his promises to us.

Though the Mosaic Covenant is a further unfolding of the Covenant of Grace, the particular administration of that Covenant, uniquely from all of its other administrations, placed an emphasis on law, the rigor of it, obedience to it and a curse for breaking it (though this law-emphasis did not alter the way of salvation). Roberts' remarkably insightful and profound enumeration of these peculiar and Law-glorious manners and circumstances of the Mosaic administration, with God's wise reasons for them, is found on pp. 63-67 below.

Roberts' most particular contribution to the understanding of the Mosaic Law is delineated and argued positively in Opinion 4, Objection 7, Part 3, pp. 94-99 below, in discussing the pivotal texts: Dt. 27:6 and Lev. 18:5, 'The man which does those things, shall live by them.' Roberts argues against the influential John Ball (1585-1640), who took the key texts as only expressing evangelical obedience, that he who is a doer of the Word, sincerely and continually (though imperfectly) by

⁵ See pp. 36, 68, 69 & 89 below for some instances of faith's interchangeability with grace.

saving faith, will find life and blessing in doing what God says (Ps. 112:1; Ps. 106:3; Ps. 119:1,2; James 1:25; Rom. 2:7; etc.).

Though the Mosaic Covenant, for Roberts, was not a re-offering of the Covenant of Works (which Adam had broken in Eden; we being under its curse), yet the Mosaic administration did hold out the promise of life by the keeping of the law; not that it was intended for the Israelites to pursue life through the law, but rather, to show them more acutely that they could not keep it (it requiring perfect obedience), that life does not come to sinners by the law and to more effectively drive them to the offered Savior (this being known in Reformed theology as the First Use of the Law). Thus the law was not held out as coordinate with, but subordinate to the offer of grace through faith in the coming Messiah, who was portrayed in shadows throughout the Mosaic administration.

If there is such a promise of life upon the keeping of the law (though it be unattainable and only hypothetical), then that makes works the condition of it. These two separate conditions present in the Mosaic administration (and in no other administration), of works and faith, was not an unexplained peculiarity for Roberts, but was fitting and morally necessary for a special reason: to show more clearly the work required of us and fulfilled by the sinner's Surety. Thus both work and faith are required in salvation: we receiving the perfect doing of Messiah's work (prefigured in the ceremonial law) through believing (alone).

It should be noted that the prominence of the condition of the law that was added to this peculiar administration of the Covenant of Grace, for Roberts, only had relevance to driving sinners to salvation and acceptance with God (the primary thing) through the Messiah, and did not enter into the Israelites' right to, or continuance in, the promised land of Canaan. The land of Canaan was on par, for Roberts, with the other blessings of God's covenant by unmeritorious evangelical obedience: graciously given and enjoyed upon the Israelites' walking by saving faith before God and growing in sanctification, such being demonstrated in doing what God commands. The always blistering-pure Law of God, for Roberts, is never reduced in its demands, or made a measure of capable obedience by which persons merit an entitlement to Covenant blessings, specifically that of remaining in the land of Canaan. Such a modern view, though not exactly the same as, yet is most akin to, Cameron's Subservient Covenant, the third opinion.

Harmonious with Roberts' paradigm, when Christ, the sinner's Surety, comes in the New Testament (under the 'Covenant of Performance' in Roberts' phrase), the peculiarity of the Mosaic administration in its emphasis on the rigor of the law, disobedience and the curse, falls away. When Roberts comes to the pivotal texts in the New Testament that contrast the Old Covenant given to Moses with the New Covenant in Christ (such as Galatians, chs. 3 & 4; 2 Cor. 3),⁶ Roberts expositis these contrasts mainly as a difference of emphasis and degree, though does affirm that these passages reflect the dual conditions of faith and works present in the Mosaic administration. The Judaizers, however, sought to find their righteousness before God by climbing the works of Mt. Sinai, perverting the law's original, gracious intention: to drive them straightly to the promised Messiah, the Savior, the only relief for law-condemned sinners.

All in all, as in most things, there is need for balance. To those who argue that the Mosaic Covenant was a pure covenant of works, or in part a covenant of works, Roberts enumerates all of the places where Christ and his grace shine in Moses' Covenant and highlights the legal threatenings found in the NT. To those who argue that Moses was a straight Covenant of Grace, little different from the New Testament, finding only evangelical obedience to God in Leviticus and Deuteronomy, Roberts gives due weight to the peculiarly Law-full character of Moses. (Jn. 1:17)

The best place to start in processing Roberts' treatment of the Mosaic Covenant may be the overview summary in Won Taek Lim's excellent dissertation, *The Covenant Theology of Francis Roberts* (2000) pp. 168-185 and 224-267. The extended outline immediately following this

⁶ Gal. 3:10-25, "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. 11 But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith. 12 And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them."

Gal. 4:22-26, "For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. 23 But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise. 24 Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. 25 For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. 26 But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all."

2 Cor. 3:6-7, "Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. 7 But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away:"

Introduction will be of help as well. Further relevant, brief selections from Roberts' *Mystery and Marrow* that may be compared, have been recently published, including: '[On the Moral Law and the Law of Nature](#)' (4 pp.) and '[On the Moral and Judicial Law](#)' (19 pp.).

For select, further resources on reformed, covenantal thought, see Lim's Introduction, which gives a 25 page summary of the recent scholarship (up to 2000) on the historical development of reformed covenant theology. The rest of Lim's dissertation summarizes the whole of Roberts' *Mystery and Marrow*. More primary sources from reformed history on the Mosaic Covenant can be found at, [The Mosaic Covenant in Reformed Theology](#) (which website is in favor of Roberts' viewpoint). More resources on the Mosaic Covenant, both introductory and meaty, new and old, can be perused at ReformedBooksOnline's page: [The Mosaic Covenant](#) (which is also an easy place to come back to this work by Roberts).

May this long overdue publishing of Roberts' work on the Mosaic Covenant be instructful to us, feed us richly, help us to rightly divide God's Word and cause us to relish our Savior more closely and deeply, who said that, 'all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses... concerning Me.' (Lk. 24:44)

Extended Outline

Of God's Giving the Law on Mt. Sinai as a Covenant, and that of Faith

Introduction

27

- Scripture calls the Mosaic Law a covenant and testament

1. 'Two covenants' Gal. 4:22-25
2. 'A testament' Heb. 9:16-21
3. 'the first testament' Heb. 9:15,18
4. 'a decaying and old testament' Heb. 8:9,13

I. That the Mosaic Law was a Covenant

29

(I) The name of covenant is attributed to it

1. By God
2. By Moses
3. By the prophets
4. By Paul

(II) It has the nature and properties of a covenant

1. Federal articles were agreed upon, containing the matter of it

- (1) Summarily in its preface, Ex. 19:3-6
- (2) The Ten Commandments, Ex. 20:1-18
- (3) Recorded in a book by Moses
- (4) Including the Moral, Ceremonial, & Judicial Law

2. The mutual consent of the federates was according to covenanting

- (1) When the preface was given, Ex. 19:7,18
- (2) When the Moral Law was given, Dt. 5:27-28
- (3) When the covenant was ratified, Ex. 24:5-8
- (4) The covenant was recorded for a perpetual memorial, Ex. 25:21

II. What Law was Given as a Covenant at Mt. Sinai?

33

(I) The law in its whole administration, moral, ceremonial, judicial

1. Because God gave the moral, ceremonial and judicial laws before the ratification of the covenant
2. Because the moral, ceremonial and judicial laws were read, written and agreed to before the ratification of the covenant

(II) The Moral Law by way of eminency is peculiarly styled 'the covenant'

1. Because the Moral Law was the most eminent of all the laws
2. Because the Ceremonial and Judicial Laws were comprised in the Moral law

III. Of What Sort and Manner of Covenant was this Mosaic Law?

35

- The difficulty of the subject

1st Opinion – A Covenant of Works

36

(I) Some say Grace was by Promise before Moses, but Moses was a Covenant of Works

Answer:

1. The Distinction is not Solid, Founded on no Scripture
2. The Covenant of Grace was Called a Covenant Before Moses
3. After the Fall, it Cannot be Proved that God made a Covenant of Works in the Church

(II) Some say 'The Old Testament' is Taken in Large and Strict Senses

1. Large Sense: Includes the Promises to Adam and Abraham
Same in substance with New Testament, differs in administration
2. Strict and Proper Sense: Only the Law of Moses, a Law of Legal Rites
A Different way of Salvation, Promising Life by Works. It Differs Essentially from the New Testament.

Answer:

1. The Distinction is not Sound. 'The Old Testament' only has these two senses:

- (1) Properly: The Mosaic Covenant, in contrast to the New Covenant
 - (2) Improperly: All the books of the Old Testament
2. The Proofs they give that Moses Differs Essentially from the N.T. are:
- (1) The Old Testament is called a Killing Letter, Ministration of Death, and Genders to Bondage, 2 Cor. 3:6-7; Gal. 4:23-24

Answer:

- A. Not to be taken absolutely but accidentally as the carnal Jews sought justification by the works of the Law contrary to God's Intention
 - B. It stands not for the whole Mosaic Law, but for the Ten Commandments spoken audibly by God from Sinai without a mediator
 - C. If the whole Mosaic Law were so, then Socinianism follows: nothing of Christ, faith, grace or spirituals was offered to the Jews by Moses
 - D. This is to be understood comparatively with the New Testament, and only differs accidentally and gradually
- (2) They are Two Distinct Testaments, Gal. 4:24, with two ways of Salvation, Gal. 3:18; 5:4; Rom. 3:27

Answer:

- A. The Old was more servile and the New more free (which is to be preferred). The condition of the Old was not works, but faith:
 - (A) The Law was a schoolmaster to bring them to Christ by faith
 - (B) The Law shut them up to faith
 - (C) Christ is the end or scope of the Law
- B. The Mosaic Law does not intend justification by works, but they mistook it for this
- C. Gal. 3:18 refers to the Law abstracted from Christ, faith and the Mosaic Covenant

D. 'The Law of works' which is opposed to faith is considered as separated from the Mosaic Covenant. The Law of works was given in Eden and was not intended so by God at Sinai.

3. Many Reasons that the Mosaic Law was not a Covenant of Works

- (1) The Covenant of Works once broken Cannot be Renewed
- (2) If it were, it would have abrogated the Covenant of Faith Revealed to Adam, Noah and Abraham, because succeeding covenants antiquate the former. But:
 - A. God's covenant with Abraham was an everlasting covenant
 - B. The Mosaic Covenant confirms the previous covenants and is in substance the same as them. The same inheritance of Canaan (a type of heaven) is promised in the Mosaic Covenant as in the Abrahamic Covenant
 - C. It is absurd to think God switches back and forth between the Covenant of Works and the Covenant of Faith through Adam, Abraham, Moses and Christ
- (3) The Mosaic Law is not against the promises, or Covenant of Faith. It is not Contradictory thereto, but subordinate. Proved:
 - A. The Law concludes all under sin that the promise may be given to believers
 - B. The Law shut them up to faith
 - C. The Law was their schoolmaster to Christ in order to be justified by faith
- (4) The Mosaic Covenant is intended by that phrase 'the covenants of promise'
- (5) The sacraments of the Abrahamic Covenant are Continued in the Mosaic Covenant
- (6) The Mosaic Covenant was ordained by the hand of a mediator, a type of Christ
- (7) The subsequent arguments that prove it to be a Covenant of Faith conclude it not to be a Covenant of Works

(I) The First Giving of the Law (Ex. 20) was the Moral Law, a Covenant of Works

(II) The Second Giving of the Law (Ex. 34) was a Covenant of Grace

5 Differences Between their Administrations

Answer:

(I) The Proposals of Two Covenants Cannot be Admitted

1. Moses never speaks of more than one covenant
2. Jeremiah and Paul speak of it as only one covenant
3. The Covenant of Works and the Covenant of Grace are so opposite each other they cannot be contained in the same administration. If by Grace, then it is no more of Works.

(II) The Distinction of Two Proposals of the Law is a Mistake. With Respect to the first Giving of the Law:

1. The Preface to the Decalogue is Gracious
2. The Preface says God is their Redeemer, and the 2nd and 5th Commandments have promises and a type of heaven in them
3. God gives them a Typical Mediator
4. Annexed to the Decalogue are Ceremonials that typify Mercy in Christ
5. The Covenant was Entered into Through Blood Typical of Christ
6. The Seventy Elders had Gracious Communion with God on the Mount
7. Moses Communed with God 40 Days on the Mount and Brought Down Ceremonials Laws Related to the Tabernacle typifying Grace and Christ, all Before the Decalogue was Given in Stone

(III) The Veil was not put on Moses' Face to Mercifully Hide the Curse

1. The Shining of Moses' Face Represented the Glory of the Mosaic Covenant (the design of which is Christ), and its Veiling was a Judgment due to the Hardness of their Hearts
2. Many Commentators Agree. Calvin is quoted.

There are Three Covenants: Nature, Grace and Subservient

(I) The Subservient Covenant in Relation to the Covenant of Nature

Agrees in 5 ways
Differs in 13 ways

(II) The Subservient Covenant in Relation to the Covenant of Grace

Agrees in 8 ways
Differs in 17 ways

A Definition of the Subservient Covenant

Answer:

(I) General Problems

1. The Three Covenants Cannot be Distinguished Adequately

- (1) The Covenant of Nature and the Subservient Covenant are both the Covenant of Works with the same stipulation of 'Do this and live'
- (2) The Mosaic Covenant is actually the Covenant of Grace, and the same with it

2. The Three Covenants Obscure the Distribution and Order of the Covenants

3. The Covenant of Works does not Lead to Christ as is claimed

(II) Specific Problems

1. The Covenant of Grace and New Covenant are Held to be the Same, but Cannot be

2. God is held in the Subservient Covenant to Only Reprove Sin and Approve of Righteousness. Yet in the Mosaic Covenant God:

- (1) Pardons Sin
- (2) Renews Righteousness in Man

3. It Makes Man the Only Party in the Covenant, Apart From Christ

4. The Possession of Canaan is all that is Promised in it. Yet:

- (1) Canaan was a Type of Heaven
- (2) The Patriarchs, who Lived in Canaan, Sought a Heavenly

- Country
- (3) This is Close to Socinianism: That Only Temporal Blessings were Promised
5. It Makes Moses Alone the Mediator of the Old Testament. Yet:
- (1) Moses was a Type of Christ
- (2) The Law was Given by Christ the Mediator
6. It Says that the Old Covenant Leads to Christ Indirectly. Yet:
- (1) Christ was the primary intention of all the Covenants of Faith
- (2) Rom. 10:4; Gal. 3:24
7. It Makes it Peculiar to the Old Covenant to terrify and for the New Covenant to Comfort. Yet:
- (1) The Old Covenant has Many Promises and much Sweetness
- In 6 respects
- (2) The New Covenant Contains Threats Also

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(I) Its Unique Administration	63
In 10 respects	
(II) The Suitability of its Administration	65
In 7 respects	
(III) Reasons why it was a Covenant of Grace	67
1. It is of the same substance as the Abrahamic Covenant	
(1) The Mosaic Covenant was God's keeping his covenant to their fathers, Dt. 7:11,12	
(2) That passage: Dt. 29:1,10-13	
2. Because the preparatory summary of it is of grace, Ex. 19:3-6	
3. 'I will be to them a God, and they shall be to Me a people' is the relation established in the Covenant of Faith, Jer. 31:33; Heb. 8:10; Eze. 36:28	
(1) Dt. 29:11-13	
(2) Jer. 11:3-5; Lev. 26:3,12	

God cannot be in covenant with sinners having union and communion with Him except through Christ by faith.

4. The preface to the Decalogue and the First Command contain the Covenant of Faith

(1) The Preface to the Decalogue

- A. He is Jehovah
- B. He is Israel's God
- C. He is their Redeemer

(2) The First Commandment

5. The administration of it shows that He intended it as a Covenant of Faith

- (1) The terror of the giving of it intended to show them their inability and drive them to a mediator
- (2) God gave them Moses (a type of Christ) as a mediator to them
- (3) The Ceremonial Law was annexed to the Law and was intended to instruct them in the Mediator promised
- (4) The Covenant was ratified by the blood of sacrifices, typical of Christ's death
- (5) The 70 elders had a gracious vision and communion with God
- (6) The Lord brings Israel to repentance for breaking his covenant by the idolatry of the golden calf
- (7) The Lord pardons their iniquity, repairs the tables of the Law and restores them to His favor

A summary of these 7 points. They were not outward only, but full of inward mysteriousness. Jesus is the soul of the Law and Covenant.

6. The mutual stipulation between the parties is the same as in the Covenant of Faith: God promises grace, Israel promises Gospel duties

(1) God promises much grace

In 5 respects

(2) Israel promises Gospel duties

In 4 respects

7. The sacramental seals of God's covenant with Abraham are continued through the Mosaic Covenant

(IV) Objections Answered	78
Objection 1: Jesus Seems not to be Promised in it	78
Answer: Christ is held forth in the Mosaic Covenant	
1. Christ and the apostles frequently testify in the New Testament that Moses revealed Christ	
(1) Jesus teaches this	
(2) The apostles teach this	
2. Christ is implicitly revealed	
In 5 ways	
3. Christ was explicitly revealed as a prophet like unto Moses	
4. Christ was the principle scope and soul of the Law	
Objection 2: Justification by Faith was not Revealed in it	80
Answer: This is a misunderstanding	
1. Where Christ is, that necessarily implies justification by faith	
2. Saving faith is implicitly commanded in the First Commandment	
3. The Mosaic Covenant drove all away from justification by works to justification by faith	
(1) The Mosaic Covenant drove all away from justification by works	
In 4 ways	
(2) The Mosaic Covenant drew men to justification by faith in Christ	
In 3 ways	
4. Regarding Gal. 3:12, 'The Law is not of faith'	
(1) This cannot be absolutely taken else it contradicts that the Law revealed the righteousness of faith, Rom. 3:21	
(2) This cannot be meant of the whole Mosaic Covenant, but is meant of the Law strictly taken as precepts which the carnal Jews principally referred to	

(3) The Mosaic Covenant pressed the perfect fulfilling of the Law, showed them it was impossible in their own persons, and pointed them to the perfect fulfilling of it in Christ their surety, typified in the ceremonials

5. Gal. 3:23, that faith came after the Law, is not to be taken absolutely but comparatively.

Objection 3: If Faith be Commanded, Then we are Justified by Works 84

Answer: This does not follow

1. Saving faith in Christ is not commanded in the Law absolutely considered
2. Saving faith does not justify as an act of obedience but is an instrument of receiving Christ's righteousness in the promise

Objection 4: It is opposed to the New Covenant (Jer. 31:31-32; Heb. 8:8-10) and was broken by Israel. It therefore cannot be a Covenant of Faith (which cannot be broken), but a temporary covenant of works.

Answer: The premises do not bear the conclusion

1. The Mosaic Covenant is only different from the New Covenant in manner of administration and degree. God promises in the New Covenant a fuller measure of Grace:
 - (1) In inscribing the Law upon the tables of the heart
 - (2) In fuller illumination of the Lord and his ways
 - (3) In the remission of sin. No more need for continual sacrifices
2. Israel did not break the Mosaic Covenant irreparably as Adam broke the Covenant of Works.

Objection 5: The Law was given by Moses, grace and truth by Jesus Christ, John 1:17. We are not under the Law but grace, Rom. 6:14-15

Answer: Grace is used in 3 ways

1. John 1:17 teaches that the ministry of Christ is preferred above that of Moses
 - (1) Christ brings the doctrine of grace more clearly, fully and in greater degree than Moses. Truth is contrasted to the types and shadows. Law predominated in Moses; grace in Christ.
 - (2) Christ brings the effects and fruits of grace: pardoning our transgressions and enabling us to perform the Law.
2. The scope of Rom. 6:14-15 is to comfort and encourage the regenerate in sanctification that they are not carnal and under the curse of the Law, but are under the power and force of saving grace

Objection 6: Paul opposes the Mosaic Law to the Promise, Gal. 3:18; Gal. 4:24-26; 2 Cor. 3:6-9

Answer: All these scriptures have been formerly cleared. See there.

Objection 7: The Condition of Life in the Mosaic Covenant is perfect doing: 'The man which does those things, shall live by them.' Lev. 18:5; Rom. 10:5; Gal. 3:12; Deut. 27:26; Gal. 3:10

Answer: This objection is of the greatest difficulty to be cleared

1. Some say the condition of doing is not legal (antecedent) but evangelical (consequent).
 - (1) John Ball argues this:
 Exactly fulfilling of the Law in every tittle is not the cause of why life is conferred, but sincere and uniform walking is the characteristic of the justified who receive the promise, Ex. 19:5; Ps. 112:1; Ps. 106:3; Ps. 119:1,2; James 1:25; Rom. 2:7
 - (2) This interpretation does not fully satisfy the objection, for:
 - A. This phrase 'Do this and live' has more in it than the other evangelical verses quote by him.

(A) 'Doing' in Rom. 10:5 and Gal. 3:12 (quoting Lev. 18:5) is directly opposed to believing as to justification and life

(B) The curse is denounced upon the least failing, Deut. 27:26; Gal. 3:10. Failings in evangelical obedience are covered, not cursed.

B. This explication does not fully reach the mystery of the Mosaic Covenant which presses both perfect doing and believing

2. Others say the Law in these passages may be considered:

(1) More largely, comprehending the whole Mosaic Covenant

(2) More restrictively, as an abstracted rule of righteousness consisting in precepts and bind to perfect obedience

Answer:

(1) This restrictive sense abstracts the Law from the Mosaic dispensation and Christ the soul of the Law, and in this sense the law was not given on Mt. Sinai and the design of the Law (apart from Christ) is perverted

(2) This large sense is intended in Rom. 10:4 and in Gal. 3:23-24, and holds out life on condition of believing in Christ

- John Ball is quoted.

(3) Both senses are used in Rom. 3:21.

(4) The Law was given in the large sense on Sinai and not in the restrictive sense. Therefore the Mosaic Covenant is a Covenant of Faith.

3. Roberts' contribution

(1) The Mosaic Covenant offered life upon two opposite conditions: works and faith.

A. Upon perfect doing of all in the Law, Rom. 10:5; Gal. 3:12; Lev. 18:5; Gal. 3:10; Dt. 27:26

B. Upon believing in Christ promised, Rom.
3:21-22; Dt. 30:11-15; Rom. 10:4; Gal. 3:22-24

(2) Believing in Christ is revealed very sparingly in the Mosaic Covenant, perfect doing very frequently and plainly. Calvin is quoted. John 1:17

(3) Though both conditions are revealed and required, perfect doing was subordinate to and for the purpose of believing in Christ, which was chiefly and ultimately intended.

A. That Believing in Christ was chiefly intended

3 arguments

B. That perfect doing was in subordination to believing

5 arguments

(4) The condition of perfect doing leaves the sinner hopeless, but the condition of believing in Christ gives hope

(5) Both of these conditions were required in the sinner or the sinner's Surety

A. Perfect doing of the Law was required because man is under the curse of the broken Covenant of Works with Adam. Thus, the Mosaic Covenant reveals the sinner's Surety who alone could fulfill the Law and bear the curse for the sinner's redemption.

B. Believing in Christ was required else the Surety's perfect doing could not become his by imputation.

(6) Both conditions are required in the Mosaic Covenant to let all men see that the duty of the Covenant of Works has its accomplishment in the Covenant of Faith through Christ.

A. Perfect obedience is exacted from sinners under the curse and is impossible.

B. Christ the Surety is set forth as bearing the curse and fulfilling all obedience for them.

C. They are directed to Christ by faith for life and righteousness.

Thus the Covenant of Works has its accomplishment in Christ, and is incorporated into and swallowed up in the Covenant of Faith, and perfect doing is attained by believing.

(7) Perfect doing being attained by believing unties many knots and reveals many mysteries.

A. How mercy and truth have kissed

B. How sin is condemned and sinners are saved

C. How sinners are justified by perfect doing and believing, by Christ's work and their faith

D. How sinners can do nothing the law requires, yet all of it (Christ's perfect obedience being imputed to them by faith)

E. How sweetly the Law and gospel agree and how both God and man are gainers by the Covenant of Faith

Summary

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Of the 4 opinions

Roberts insisted more particularly and fully on this topic because:

1. This is the hardest Gordian knot in all the covenant administrations
2. This point rightly understood gives light to the whole stream of the scriptures
3. The Mosaic Covenant is misapprehended by most
4. The Mosaic Covenant has puzzled to myself and I desire to help others

IV. Why the Lord Gave this Covenant of Faith by Moses to Israel

102

- This question has been previously answered

V. Inferences From the Mosaic Covenant being a Covenant of Faith

103

(I) God's giving of his Law to Israel was an act of singular grace and favor toward Israel

1. Had God dealt with Israel only as a Supreme Lawgiver and not by covenant, this still would have been an eminent act of favor to Israel

- (1) That God would own them
- (2) It would reveal his righteous nature to them by Law
- (3) It would guide their steps
- (4) It would distinguish Israel from all other people

2. In that it was a covenant, and that, a Covenant of Faith

(1) Insofar as it was a covenant

- A. It shows God's condescension to Israel
- B. It shows Israel's ascension to God
- C. It shows the familiar union and communion between God and Israel

(2) Insofar as it was a Covenant of Faith

- A. Hereby Christ is revealed as the object of faith
- B. Hereby all spiritual blessings in Christ are assured
- C. Hereby faith is required for appropriating these benefits
- D. Hereby the gospel bringing salvation is preached to them

(II) The Mosaic Covenant revealed Christ more than any covenant before it 105

Christ is Soul of the Covenant of Faith and each administration rises in greater perfection. The Mosaic Covenant reveals more of Christ in his:

- 1. Particular descent
- 2. Person and natures (human and divine)
- 3. Office as the Mediator, as a:

- (1) Prophet
- (2) Priest

- A. By expiation
- B. By his ascension
- C. By intercession
- D. By his benediction for the people

(3) King, under the types of:

- A. Moses
- B. Joshua
- C. David

Christ was revealed in the Moral Law as a Prophet, in the Ceremonial Law as a Priest, in the Judicial Law as a King

4. States wherein He executed his office

(1) Humiliation

- A. By becoming man
- B. By suffering death

(2) Exaltation

- A. By rising from the dead
- B. By ascending to heaven

(III) Israel was saved by Christ under the Mosaic Covenant as we are in the New Testament. Hence: 110

1. All who are saved in the Old and New Testaments are members of the one mystical body of Christ
2. Spiritual (as well as physical) blessings were revealed to the faithful in the Mosaic Covenant, as they are in the New Testament

A. Spiritual blessings were primary intended, physical blessings secondarily

B. The Socinians therefore greatly err who say that eternal life and the Holy Spirit were not promised in the Mosaic Covenant

Answer:

(A) Christ was abundantly revealed and eternal life in Him

(B) God promising Christ in the Old Testament promised all things in Him

(C) Canaan was promised, a type of eternal life in heaven

(D) The faithful in the Old Testament obtained eternal life

a. Enoch and the patriarchs lived with God after death

b. Moses and Elijah partook of heaven

c. Contra the Socinians, if the Old Testament faithful obtained eternal life then it must have been promised to them as they could not have obtained it but by faith

(E) The New Testament promises are better than those of the Old Testament not in kind, but by degree

3. The Mosaic Covenant is one and the same in substance with the New Testament

(IV) The Mosaic Covenant did not intend sinners' justification by works, but only by faith in Christ. Thus we may conclude that:

1. The carnal Jews were in error about justification, not discerning Christ
2. Such teachers in the church that urge justification by the works of the law are false teachers, including the Papacy
3. The law is not contrary to faith

Objection: Then why does the Mosaic Covenant run so much upon works and commands?

Answer:

- (1) It does not run altogether upon doing but also requires believing
- (2) Faith was revealed more darkly in the infant church under age, the clearer revelation of faith being reserved till Christ's coming with its glorious privileges
- (3) The stream of the Mosaic Covenant runs much upon doing in order to:
 - A. Convince carnal people that they cannot be justified by doing
 - B. Force men to seek Christ by faith who has fulfilled the law
 - C. Show sinners that they cannot be justified except in exact fulfilling of the law or by a surety
 - D. Instruct them that God intended works to be fruits of true faith and the way towards attaining the promises

(V) The Mosaic Law was Israel's gospel 116

(VI) The many mistakes and errors about the Mosaic Covenant may be justly condemned 116

1. Those of Legalists
2. Those of the Antinomians
3. Those of the Socinians

- (VII) To rightly understand the Mosaic Covenant one must look upon it with an evangelical eye 117

End of the Extended Outline

Aphorism 2:

Of God's Giving the Law on Mt. Sinai as a Covenant, and that of Faith

God gave the Law by Moses to Israel from Mt. Sinai as a covenant, and that not as a covenant of works, nor as a mixed covenant of works and grace, nor as a covenant subservient to the Covenant of Grace, but as a Covenant of Faith.

Here upon, this covenant administration (to distinguish it from other federal expressions), may be styled God's Sinai Covenant. This distinctive denomination the scripture has already in effect given it, for:

1. Paul, discoursing of Abraham's two wives, Hagar the bond-woman and Sarah the free-woman, says: 'Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants (or, testaments), the one from Mt. Sinai which genders to bondage, which is Hagar.' (Gal. 4:22-25) So he calls it the covenant from Mt. Sinai.

2. This Sinai Covenant is also elsewhere called:

(1) 'A testament,' διαθηκη (Heb. 9:16-21) in reference to the testator's death and blood typically⁷ represented by the death and blood of sacrifices added for the dedication and confirmation of the testament. 'For where a testament is there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead.' (Heb. 9:16-17)

(2) 'The first testament,' πρωτη διαθηκη (Heb. 9:15,18) because it was in order of time and in actual subsistence [existence] the first of those two testaments which God vouchsafed his church.

(3) 'A decaying and old testament,' διαθηκη παλαιουμενον και γηρασκον (Heb. 8:9,13) So called partly because it was older than the New Testament, though not

⁷ [Having the character of a type, or figure]

older than the evangelical promises and covenant;⁸ partly and especially because it was of such a dispensation that it was to wax old and decay, and did wax old and decay when the New Testament obtained and came in place.

This Sinai Covenant, this 'testament,' this 'first testament,' this 'old testament,' is that federal administration which now is to be considered. The surpassing excellencies of this federal dispensation, beyond all that went before, have been touched upon in the beginning of this chapter in ten particulars,⁹ all which may as cogent motives strongly persuade us diligently to enquire into the abstruse mysteriousness of this excellent Covenant.

For clearing [the explaining] of this aphorism,¹⁰ consider:

- I. That the law given on Mt. Sinai was given as a covenant to Israel.
- II. What law it was which was given as a covenant.
- III. What sort of covenant the law was.
- IV. Why God at that time gave such a covenant by Moses unto Israel.
- V. Inferences from this.

These five things¹¹ being evidenced, the aphorism will be plain.

⁸ [Such as Gen. 3:15, etc.]

⁹ [See [Chapter 4, pp. 651-652](#)]

¹⁰ [A terse saying, expressing a general principle or truth]

¹¹ [The original text only had the first four things listed here even though there are five main divisions in Roberts' work. The fifth item has been editorially inserted here for the reader's convenience.]

I. That the Law Given from Mt. Sinai to Israel was Given as a Covenant

...in a covenant way and in the notion of a covenant. This is unquestionably clear, in that:
(I) The name of covenant is often given to the law, and (II) The true nature of a covenant was in the law, as then dispensed:

(I) The name of covenant is frequently attributed to the law given on Mt. Sinai, both in books of the Old and New Testament, as:

1. By the Lord God Himself. In his preface to the giving of the law, He styles his law a covenant. 'Now therefore if ye will obey my voice indeed and keep my Covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people.' (Ex. 19:5) So He styles it often elsewhere.

2. By Moses the man of God:

'And He declared unto you his Covenant, which He commanded you to perform, even Ten Commandments, and He wrote them upon two tables of stone' (Dt. 4:13).

'Take heed unto yourselves, lest ye forget the covenant of the Lord your God, which He made with you, and make you a graven image, or the likeness of anything which the Lord thy God has forbidden you' (Dt. 4:23).

And elsewhere, 'The Lord our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. The Lord made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even with us who are all of us here alive this day. The Lord talked with you face to face, in the mount, out of the midst of the fire, saying, I am the Lord thy God, etc.' (Dt. 5:2-6 to v. 22)

So he repeats the whole Moral Law as the covenant then made with them. And again:

'These are the words of the Covenant, which the Lord commanded Moses to make with the children of Israel in the land of Moab, beside the Covenant which He made with them in Horeb' (Dt. 29:1).

And:

‘If there be found among you, man or woman, that has wrought wickedly in the sight of the Lord thy God, in transgressing his covenant, and has gone and served other gods, etc.’ (Dt. 17:2)

3. By the prophets. As:

‘Gather my saints together unto me: those that have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice.’ (Ps. 50:5; Ex. 24)

He seems peculiarly to intend that solemn covenant at Mt. Sinai. When King Solomon caused the ark to be brought into his place in the temple finished by him, it's said:

‘There was nothing in the ark save the two tables of stone, which Moses put there at Horeb, when the Lord made a covenant with the children of Israel, etc.’ (1 Kings 8:9 with 2 Chron. 6:11)

Israel is said to be carried captive into Assyria:

‘Because they obeyed not the voice of the Lord their God, but transgressed his Covenant, and all that Moses the servant of the Lord commanded.’ (2 Kings 18:12)

The Lord also said by Jeremiah:

‘Cursed is the man that keeps not the words of this covenant, which I commanded your fathers in the day that I brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, etc.’ (Jer. 11:3-5)

And afterwards, prophesying of the days of the New Covenant:

‘Behold, the days come, says the Lord, that I will make a New Covenant with the House of Israel, and with the House of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, etc.’ (Jer. 31:31-32)

4. By the apostle also. Paul reciting the Jews’ privileges, says:

‘Who are Israelites, to whom pertains the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants and the giving of the law, etc.’ (Rom. 9:4-5)

By ‘covenants’ he seems to intend the two tables of the covenant. Also, alleging that of Jeremiah touching the New Covenant, he says:

‘Not according to the covenant that I made with thy fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt.’ (Heb. 8:9)

Elsewhere he tells the Ephesians, touching their pagan state:

‘That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise.’ (Eph. 2:11-12)

Where though, he may call all the covenant dispensations before Christ’s coming ‘covenants of promise,’ yet, seeing he immediately before mentions the commonwealth of Israel, it is to me very probable that he intended especially this eminent Sinai Covenant.

(II) The nature and properties of a covenant evidently agree to, and are found in, the Law as published on Mt. Sinai to Israel. For, herein are:

1. Federal articles agreed upon, containing the matter and substance of the Covenant. These are:

(1) Summarily propounded in God’s preface to the giving of the Law (Ex. 19:3-6). God propounds them to Moses, and Moses to the people.

(2) Largely and audibly promulgated with a great voice by God Himself from Mt. Sinai in the hearing of all Israel, saying, ‘I am the Lord your God, etc.’ (Ex. 20:1-18; Dt. 5:2-6, etc.) These things promulgated were the Ten Words, or commandments of the Moral Law.

(3) More largely and fully recorded in a book by Moses for the constant memory of the thing. ‘For Moses told the people all the words of the Lord and all the judgments (not only the Moral Law, but many Ceremonials and the main body of the Judicials, which God had already declared to Moses), and Moses wrote all the words of the Lord’ (Ex. 24:3).

(4) This has reference to all that went before: Morals, Ceremonials and Judicials. This writing is called, ‘the book of the covenant.’ (Ex. 24:7)

2. The mutual consent of federates to these articles and matters of the covenant according to the custom of covenanting. This consent between God and Israel is remarkably storied [given in story] three times, namely:

(1) When the sum of the Covenant was propounded in the preface. (Ex. 19:3-6) God propounds 'and all the people answered together, and said, All that the Lord has spoken, we will do.' (Ex. 19:7,18)

(2) When the Moral Law was promulgated. God spoke it (Ex. 20:1, etc., Dt. 5:2-6, etc. 22). The people, terrified with God's immediate voice and unable to hear it any more, requested Moses, saying, 'Go thou near, and hear all that the Lord our God shall say, And speak thou unto us, all that the Lord our God shall speak unto thee. And we will hear it and do it.' (Ex. 20:19; Dt. 5:27)

(3) When Moses, both by word of mouth and by writing, had declared to Israel all the words of the Lord touching Morals, Ceremonials, and Judicials, the people answered, 'all the words, which the Lord has said, will we do;' 'All that the Lord has said, will we do, and be obedient.' (Ex. 24:3,7)

(3) The federal sanction, dedication, and solemn ratification of the covenant between God and Israel thus consented unto by them: Moses, reading the book of the Covenant in the audience of the people under Mt. Sinai, offering of sacrifices, and sprinkling the blood, one half upon the altar (representing God) and the other half upon the people, saying, 'Behold the blood of the covenant which the Lord has made with you concerning all these words.' (Heb. 9:18-21; Ex. 24:5-8) This was a most renowned federal solemnity.

(4) The divine recording and custody of the covenant for a perpetual memorial to after generations. God Himself wrote his Covenant in two tables of stone (Dt. 4:13), which tables are thereupon called, 'the tables of the covenant.' (Dt. 9:9,11,15) God commanded these tables to be kept in an ark appointed for that end (Ex. 25:21), which ark is thereupon frequently styled, 'the ark of the covenant.' (Num. 10:33; 14:44, and often in the Old Testament; see also Heb. 9:4)

By these things it is undeniably evident that the law given on Mt. Sinai was given in the notion and way of a covenant. I have cleared this the rather [fully] because few consider that the law was given at Mt. Sinai as a covenant.

II. What Law it was which was Given as a Covenant at Mt. Sinai

This may the rather be questioned because three sorts of laws (namely, the Moral, Ceremonial, and Judicial Laws) were then and there given to Israel, as I have already manifested. Thus, I conceive, we may briefly resolve that:

(I) The law in the largest acceptation [usage of the word], as it imports the whole administration of the law (Moral, Ceremonial, and Judicial) at Mt. Sinai by Moses to Israel, was given as a covenant, for these reasons:

1. Because God gave on Mt. Sinai to Israel (before his covenant was completed and ratified beneath the mount) not only his whole Moral Law, but also many Ceremonials (as touching altars, sacrifices, firstfruits, the seventh year sabbath, the three solemn feasts every year, etc.) and the chief body of Judicials (compare well together Ex. 20-24). Why should these be given before the sanction of the covenant but because they were to be integral parts of the matter of the covenant?

2. Because on the evening before the covenant was solemnly ratified, 'Moses came and told the people all the words of the Lord and all the judgments.' (Ex. 24:3-4) To all which the people consented promising obedience. This evidently refers both to Morals, Ceremonials and Judicials, which Moses had in charge from God.

Moses wrote all the words of the Lord and early in the morning he: built an altar beneath the mount, killed sacrifices, read the Book of the Covenant to the people, sprinkled the blood of the covenant (Ex. 24:4-8); and thus the covenant (containing all these three sorts of laws) was solemnly established. This is a very cogent and convincing reason to show that the covenant contained the whole law given on Mt. Sinai: Moral, Ceremonial, and Judicial.

This is much to be noted because this will hereafter tend singularly to show the nature and kind of this covenant, that it was not a covenant of works, but of faith.

(II) Notwithstanding, the Moral Law is by way of eminency counted and peculiarly styled, 'the covenant' (Dt. 4:13,23; 5:2-22), as God promulgated it and wrote it twice on

two tables of stone, as those two tables are called, 'the tables of covenant' (Dt. 9:9,11,15), and the ark containing the tables, 'the ark of the covenant,' (Num. 10:33; 14:44), all having special and peculiar reference to the Moral Law. This I conceive to be styled, 'the covenant', not by way of exclusion of the rest, but by way of eminency and prerogative above all the rest:

1. Because the Moral Law was the chief and most eminent of all these laws in many regards.
2. Because the Ceremonial and Judicial Laws were comprised in the Moral. For the Ceremonial Laws are all comprised in the First Table (being additional explanations thereof, till the time of reformation when Christ the promised Seed should come) and all the Judicials were comprised under the Second Table (being additional explanations thereof to continue in force till the Jewish commonwealth should be dissolved).¹²

Thus, if we say that the Moral Law, as given on Mt. Sinai, was that Sinai Covenant, we shall speak safely, inasmuch as both the Ceremonial and Judicial Laws were comprehended therein and so are not excluded from the covenant.

¹² [This categorization has some merit to it, but cannot be taken absolutely or without qualification, as: the Ceremonial Law includes regulations respecting horizontal social relations, and the Judicial Law includes regulations respecting Israel's vertical relation with God.]

III. Of What Sort and Manner of Covenant was this Law

This particular is involved in much difficulty and therefore requires the larger handling. One¹³ compares it to the land of Canaan, which was a good and pleasant land, but there are many giants, many great objections in the way. And as Abraham's ram was entangled in the thicket by the head, so very many and learned writers are much entangled and perplexed in their notions and expressions about the nature of this Sinai Covenant, wherein they not only dissent oft-times from one another, but sometimes from themselves, even so far that it is hard to discover their sense and meaning.

I find principally four several opinions touching this matter, namely:

1. The first holding, that the Law on Mount Sinai was given as a Covenant of Works, not of Grace (or, of Faith, as I would rather stile it).
2. The second holding, that it was a Mixed Covenant, partly of Works, partly of Grace.
3. The third holding, that it was not purely and properly either a Covenant of Nature [Works] or of Grace, but a Covenant Subservient to the Covenant of Grace, and preparing thereunto.
4. The fourth holding, that it was a Covenant of Grace for substance, though propounded in an unusual way of terror and servile bondage, suitable to that people, time, and state of the Church under age.

Touching these various opinions, I intend not polemically to discuss them, but rather positively to give a brief narrative of them severally, and to annex briefly some few reasons, partly against such of them as do not satisfy and partly for that which is the truth. After which, I shall remove objections made to the contrary.

¹³ Anthony Burgess, *Vindication of the Law*, Lecture 24

1st Opinion:

That the Law Given on Mt. Sinai was Given as a Covenant of Works,
not as a Covenant of Grace.

And so the asserter of this opinion makes the Old and New Testament (as the Covenant of Works and Grace [respectively]), not only to differ gradually in some degree of manifestation and ministration, but also [to be] opposite [to each other,] specifically in substance and in kind.

(I) Some express themselves thus herein: that God conferred grace to the fathers before Moses, not by covenant but only by promise, accounting all that Moses comprehends under covenant, to be the Covenant of Works and Old Testament.

Answer: But this satisfies not, for:

1. That distinction of promise from covenant, as opposite and contra-distinct thereunto, is not solid, not being grounded sufficiently on any Scripture. Yea, Scripture contrariwise assures us that God's contract with Abraham is sometimes styled, 'the promise' (Rom. 4:13; Gal. 3:18-19), sometimes, 'covenant' (Gal. 3:17) and sometimes it is reckoned up and comprised among, 'the covenants of promise' (Eph. 2:12); yea, sometimes styled 'promises', and 'covenant' (Gal. 3:16-17). So that the scripture uses in this dispensation to Abraham the words of 'covenants' and 'promises' promiscuously as synonyms, to denote one and the same.

2. God made a covenant with Noah a little before the flood, which was a Covenant of Grace and Faith (Gen. 6:18, etc. with Heb. 11:7). For, Noah believing and obeying God, therein became heir of the righteousness which is by faith. This, God calls his Covenant with Noah. God made afterwards promises to Abraham which He calls his 'covenant' (Gen. 15:18; 17:1-2, etc.) again and again, and which had all the accomplishments of a covenant (under which Abraham was justified by faith, Gen. 15:5-6, and became the father of all the faithful, Rom. 4:11-18). Therefore, the Covenant of Grace was (and was called) 'a covenant', long before Moses.

3. After the Covenant of Works was broken by Adam's Fall, it cannot be proved that God did at any time afterward set on foot a Covenant of Works in the Church of God, as afterwards will more appear.

(II) Some¹⁴ express themselves with much more color of scripture. Thus, this phrase, 'the Old Testament', is taken [in different senses:] largely and strictly.

1. Largely, so that not only the Law of Moses but also the promise to Adam (and after to Abraham), are comprised under the Old Testament (Gal. 3:17; Eph. 2:12). And in this notion the Old Testament differs not from the New in substance, but only in manner of administration.

2. Strictly and properly.¹⁵ So under the name of the Old Testament was signified the Law as given by Moses to the Jews, promising life under the condition of the curse to transgressors, together with an intolerable burden of legal rites and a yoke of the strictest polity, which therefore is called a 'killing letter', a 'ministration of death and condemnation, gendering to bondage', like Hagar (2 Cor. 3:6,7; Gal. 4:23,24).

To this, the New Testament (in proper signification) is opposed, it being a doctrine of spiritual grace and salvation fully revealed by the Son of God from the bosom of the Father, and divulged by the apostles' preaching, wherein is promised free righteousness and eternal life through, and for, the merit of Christ the Testator, to all that should believe in Him, by the grace that He would give them. In this signification,¹⁶ the Old and New Testament do not differ only in some circumstances and accidents, but essentially (and, using Paul's words), they are two testaments (Gal. 4:23). For in them both is instituted an altogether diverse way of salvation, seeing that [the Old Testament] promises life under the condition of works, but this [New Testament:] remission of sin and eternal life to him that leans on Christ by faith.

Therefore they are said to be fallen from grace that would be justified by the Law (Gal. 5:4). And the Law is so opposed to the promise that if the inheritance be by that, it cannot be by this (Gal. 3:18). There's the same opposition of the law of works and the law of faith (Rom. 3:27). The first whereof is understood to be a doctrine

¹⁴ *Synopsis of Pure Theology*, Disputation 23, Theses 10-21

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, Theses 5-7

¹⁶ To this effect also Gerhard expresses his opinion. In location, *Of the Gospel*, vol. 3, ch. 27, section

promising salvation upon the condition: If thou shalt do all-things; the other a doctrine propounding the same salvation upon the condition: If thou shalt believe, which very condition God gives all that are justified ability to perform.

Therefore, in this sense, the Old Testament is called, 'the ministry of death', 'a killing letter' (2 Cor. 3:6), a yoke pressing the worshippers with intolerable servitude (Acts 15:10), 'a shadow of good things to come' (Heb. 10:1), 'imperfect', 'to be abolished', etc. Opposite unto which the New Testament in the foresaid signification is the 'ministry of the enlivening Spirit', Christ's 'light yoke', storing us with the Spirit of adoption and liberty of the sons of God (Matt 11:29; Rom. 8:17), having the true image of the things, perfect and eternal.

Thus they [the Leiden professors, say].

Answer: Though I do much honor the learned authors of this elaborate book,¹⁷ yet I desire much more to honor the truth of the gospel, and therefore I cannot but profess myself wholly unsatisfied in this their opinion about the Old Testament, or Sinai Covenant, and do account it an error, chiefly upon a threefold account. For:

1. The distinction of the Old Testament as (1) largely taken, comprising the promise to Adam and to Abraham as well as the Law of Moses, and (2) as strictly taken, only for the Law of Moses promising life under condition of the curse to transgressors, I say this distinction (whereupon this opinion is grounded) is not sound nor warranted by scripture.

For I find this phrase, 'the Old Testament', used in scripture only in these two senses or acceptable uses, namely:

(1) Properly, for the covenant which God made with Israel at Mt. Sinai, which is called 'a covenant or testament, decaying and waxing old' (Heb. 8:9-13) because God had antiquated it and made it old by instituting the New.

(2) Improperly and metonymically for the books of Moses and the prophets containing this Old Testament in them, 'for until this day remains the same veil untaken away in the reading of the Old Testament.' (2 Cor. 3:14)

¹⁷ *Synopsis of Pure Theology*

So Augustine calls¹⁸ the books of the Scripture, *vetera et nova instrumenta*, 'old and new instruments', as being authentic and confirmed by many witnesses. Tertullian,¹⁹ alluding to the judicial term, calls the Bible, *nostra digesta* [our digest]; others: our pandects [the complete body of the laws of a country], etc.

Now this distinction [as largely and strictly taken] wanting [lacking] sufficient footing in Scripture, the opinion set thereon, that the Law was given as a Covenant of works, falls with it. As for those two texts alleged to countenance the distinction: Gal. 3:17; Eph. 2:12, 'covenant' and 'covenants of promise' are mentioned therein, but not at all: 'Old Covenant'. Therefore they prove nothing.

Add [as a further proof] hereunto: this distinction²⁰ interferes [blocks] and contradicts itself. While it grants that, as the Old Testament is taken largely, comprising the Law of Moses, promise to Adam, to Abraham, etc., it differs not in substance, but only in manner of administration from the New Testament, but as taken strictly for the Law of Moses: it differs in substance. How can this be, seeing that in the larger acceptation [use of the term] the Law of Moses is also comprised? Can the same Law of Moses, as such, both agree and differ in substance from the New Testament?

2. The further proofs from scripture, which are invalid to prove that the Old Testament and law dispensed by Moses differ essentially, and not only in some accidents and circumstances from the New Testament, are:

(1) That the Old Testament is called, 'a killing letter', 'a ministration of death and condemnation,' gendering to bondage, as Hagar (2 Cor. 3:6,7; Gal. 4:23,24).

Answer: These expressions do not prove that the Old Testament dispensed by Moses essentially differed from the New Testament, nor consequently that the Old Testament was a Covenant of works. For:

A. These expressions of Paul to the Corinthians, touching Moses' ministration of the Law (2 Cor. 3:6-7), are not to be taken absolutely, as if it had been absolutely and in itself the ministration of death and

¹⁸ Epistle 86, vol. 2, p. 389, Basil, 1569. *Apostolorum Instrumentum*; Tertullian, *Advers. Marian*, Book 4,

¹⁹ Tertullian, *Advers. Marian*, Book 4, ch. 3

²⁰ *Synopsis of Pure Theology*, Disputation 23, Thesis 10,15

condemnation. For Scripture elsewhere stiles it, *λογα ζωντα*, 'lively oracles' (Acts 7:38 with Lev. 18:5; Eze. 20; Neh. 9:29), or (as some copies) *λογον ζωντα*, 'a lively word', or 'living word', that is: an enlivening word, giving life.

But understand them [the Old and New Testaments] respectively and accidentally,²¹ in respect of this error and mistake of the carnal and ignorant Jews, and such as follow them, who abstracted and separated Moses' ministration from Christ, faith and the Gospel, resting in the works of the Law and seeking to be justified thereby, contrary to God's intention and scope in that ministration:

'For they had a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to stablish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God, not perceiving that Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to everyone that believes.' (Rom. 10:2-4)

Hence therefore it came to pass that they perverted the true end and scope of Moses' ministration of the Law, and his lively oracles became to them a ministration of death and condemnation (Rom. 8:3; Gal. 3:10), they being unable fully to perform them.

Nor need this seem strange, for even the New Testament, called 'the ministration of the Spirit' and 'the ministration of righteousness' (2 Cor. 3:6,8-9), because it is such absolutely and in itself, yet, accidentally upon occasion of man's abuse and corruptions, it is the savor of death unto death ([per] 2 Cor. 2:16). And [further] men are said to 'have had no sin if Christ had not come' (Jn. 15:22),²² and that those men shall more hardly escape that neglect Christ's ministration than they that transgressed against Moses' ministration (Heb. 2:2-3; 10:28-29).²³

These expressions, of a ministration of death and condemnation, reached also the Ceremonial Law [in the Old Testament], as well as the Moral, for the Ceremonial was part of the ministration. But the Ceremonial Law (as is confessed by all) in itself held forth life and

²¹ [Something not essential to them, or necessary to their being and existence]

²² [Roberts' point is that such a verse cannot be taken absolutely with no qualification]

²³ [Thus, even the New Testament condemns, as did the Old Testament]

righteousness in Christ. Therefore it was a ministry of death, not in itself directly, but by accident and indirectly through the Jews' error and abuse.

B. If the ministration of the Law in itself ministered death and condemnation, it was not universally the whole ministration, but only some part of it, namely: God's own immediate and terrible promulgation of the Moral Law out of the midst of the fire at the first to Israel without a mediator (Ex. 20:1-22 compared with Dt. 5:1-26). For hereby they were so terrified that they durst hear God's immediate voice no more lest they should die and that great fire should consume them. Therefore they sued to have Moses for a mediator, a type of Christ.

C. Should the whole ministration of the Law be a ministry of death and condemnation, then that absurd doctrine of the Socinians²⁴ would hence ensue, who hereupon conclude that nothing of Christ, faith, grace or spirituals was offered to the Jews by Moses.

D. Whereas it is said, that the Old Testament at Sinai gendered to bondage (Gal. 4:23-24), as Hagar: understand it not absolutely and wholly, as if it gendered to bondage and nothing else, having no liberty at all therein. For even to Israel, under this ministration, pertained the adoption (Rom. 9:4), which has in it filial liberty.

But understand it comparatively, for under this ministration [of the Old Testament], the Church, being in minority, was kept in a far more servile and slavish condition under tutors and governors till Christ (Gal. 4:1-6) than the Church, come to age since Christ, now is in under the New Testament.

So that the difference between these two Testaments is not essential and specific, but only accidental and gradual.

²⁴ [Sociniansim (see [Wikipedia](#) for more background info) held something akin to a variety of Dispensationalist doctrine: that only physical and temporal blessings were promised in the Old Testament, and not spiritual blessings.]

(2) That the Old and New Testament are two distinct Testaments (Gal. 4:24) holding forth two altogether diverse ways of salvation: That, under condition of works; this, of faith. Hence, they are said to be fallen from grace who would be justified by the Law (Gal. 5:4). And the Law is so opposed to the promise that if the inheritance be by that, it cannot be by this (Gal. 3:18). So, the Law of Works, and Law of Faith are opposed (Rom. 3:27).

Answer:

A. Though the apostle styles [them] the Old and New; that from Sinai, this from Zion: two distinct covenants, or testaments; yet he does not make them opposite and contrary one to the other as a Covenant of Works and a Covenant of Faith, requiring these opposite conditions, but rather in the allegory of Hagar and Sarah (Gal. 4:21-27), [he] prefers the New Covenant before the Old, this being more servile, that more free in the manner of administration, as he had formerly intimated (Gal. 4:1-7). Nor were works required unto justification as the condition of the Sinai Covenant (the Old Testament), but faith:

Partly because the Law was their schoolmaster to bring them to Christ that they might be justified by faith (Gal. 3:24).

Partly because the Law did 'shut them up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed' (Gal. 3:2-3), that so they might not wander away from the true way of justification by faith only into any erroneous bypath of justification.

Partly, because 'Christ is the end (or scope) of the Law for righteousness to everyone that believes' (Rom. 10:4).

The Law therefore intended not justification by works at all, but only by Christ, and faith.

B. They that did seek to be justified by the Law are said to be 'fallen from grace.' (Gal. 5:4) Not that the Law (as it comprehends the whole administration thereof by Moses) holds forth or intends a justification by works repugnant to the Gospel's justification of free grace by faith, but that they who erroneously mistook the Law and ends thereof and

sought for a justification by the deeds of the Law of their own invention and establishment, these were fallen from grace, even from the gracious way of justification by faith revealed both in the Sinai Covenant and in the New Testament.

C. Whereas it is said, 'If the inheritance be of the Law, it is no more of promise' (Gal. 3:18), understand not the Law in that sense and notion in which it was dispensed at Mt. Sinai, namely, as a Covenant of Faith (as afterward will appear), for so the eternal inheritance of heaven typified by Canaan was by promise in the very Law (Ex. 20:12 with Josh. 14:1-20:1; 11:43-45) and under this covenant administration they came to possess Canaan; but understand the Law as abstracted from Christ, from faith, and indeed, from Moses' dispensation of it, as merely requiring works under the penalty of the curse (as the legal justitaries [legalists] took it) and so the inheritance cannot be by promise if it be by the Law.

D. The 'law of works' and 'law of faith' are opposed (Rom. 3:27) as the law of works is separated and considered abstractly from Moses' ministration, not as it is concretely joined with and comprised in Moses' administration; as the law of works was given in Paradise, not on Sinai; as the Law of works was mistaken by men, not as it was on Sinai intended by God, so it is opposed to the law of faith, and not otherwise.

Thus the grounds of this opinion fail.

3. There are many cogent grounds or reasons on the contrary, evincing the negative, namely: that the Law was not given on Mt. Sinai as a covenant of works, as:

(1) Because the Covenant of Works, once violated and broken, admits of no repetition or reiteration to the parties delinquent. For in the nature and tenor of it, it requires perfect and perpetual obedience (Gen. 2:27 with Gal. 3:10), which cannot be [the cae] after obedience is once interrupted by the least failure. Now in Adam's fall, all his mere posterity, in and with him,

brake the Covenant of Works. Therefore they are forever rendered incapable of any further covenant of works.

Nor can it be evidenced by any good ground from Scripture that ever God renewed or set on foot again the broken Covenant of Works with lapsed [fallen] man. But rather, by way of remedy to that irreparable Covenant of Works, He presently reveals the promise and Covenant of Faith in Christ, still enlarging the same from age to age till the perfection of it in the New Covenant.

(2) Because, if the Sinai Covenant had been given as a covenant of works, then it had antiquated and abrogated the Covenant of Faith which God formerly revealed in Christ to Abraham, to Noah, and to Adam; for a New Covenant succeeding and brought into place antiquates the former, as the apostle argues (Heb. 8:13). But:

A. God's Covenant with Abraham was to be an everlasting covenant (Gen. 17:7), being confirmed by two immutable things: God's Word and oath, wherein it was impossible for God to lie. (Heb. 6:17-18)

B. Besides, this Sinai Covenant was so far from abolishing God's Covenant of Faith with the fathers, that it confirms it and is in substance and effect one and the same with it:

'Wherefore it shall come to pass if you hearken to these judgments to do them that the Lord thy God shall keep unto thee the Covenant and the mercy which He swore unto your fathers.' (Dt. 7:12)

Also, in this Sinai Covenant, the same inheritance of Canaan (a type of the heavenly inheritance) is promised again and again, which was covenanted to Abraham in the Covenant of Faith.

C. Finally, how absurd is it to imagine that at the Fall of Adam God should lay aside the Covenant of Works and set up the Covenant of Faith from Adam till Moses, and [then] at Sinai should again lay aside the Covenant of Faith and erect the Covenant of Works from Moses till Christ; and [then,] last of all, at Christ's coming lay aside once more the Covenant of Works and take up again the Covenant of Faith till the

end of the world? This is fast and loose, backwards and forwards, and makes God very inconsistent with Himself.

(3) Because the Law, as given on Mount Sinai, the whole ministration thereof, is not against the promises or Covenant of Faith. It is diverse, but not adverse;²⁵ subordinate, not contradictory to the New Testament. 'Is the Law then against the promises of God? God forbid!' (Gal. 3:21-24) He abhors such a thought. The Law, as considered by legal justitaries [legalists], was against the promises, but as given on Mt. Sinai, [it] was not against them. This he proves:

A. Because the scripture, especially the Law, concludes all under sin, that the promise may be given to believers.

B. Because by the Law they were, not shut up from the faith, but shut up unto the faith that afterward should be revealed.

C. Because the Law was their schoolmaster to Christ that they might be justified by faith. But if the Law were a covenant of works, it must needs be against the promises.

(4) Because, the Law (the Sinai Covenant) seems especially to be intended in that phrase, 'the covenants of promise.' (Eph. 2:12) All God's Covenants after the Fall till Christ was performed, seem to be styled 'the covenants of promise' in reference to Christ promised, but chiefly the Sinai Covenant, because the commonwealth of Israel, constituted at Mt. Sinai, is mentioned with it. Now the covenants of promise were not the Covenant of Works, but of Faith; one as well as another.

(5) Because the ordinary fixed sacraments annexed to the Covenant of Faith dispensed from Abraham till this Sinai Covenant, namely, circumcision and the Passover (both of them signifying Christ), were also annexed and continued to this Sinai Covenant till the coming of Christ (Lk. 2:21; 22:13-

²⁵ ["Therefore, these two groups of teachings are not adverse, but diverse: not opposed to each other by way of contradiction, but mutually subordinated."] "*Ergo non adversa, sed diversa: non contradictione opposita, sed subordinata sunt haec duo doctrinarum genera.*" Johann Gerhard [(1582-1637) a Lutheran], *Of the Gospel*, Book 12, Section 53, in location.

15), and no other ordinary sacraments but they. Therefore the Sinai Covenant could not be a covenant of works, being sealed and confirmed with the 'seals of the righteousness of faith.' (Rom. 4:11)

(6) Because this Sinai Covenant 'was ordained in the hand of a mediator' (Gal. 3:19-20 with Ex. 20:19; Dt. 5:27; 18:15-17), Moses, as a type of Christ the true Mediator. But the Covenant of Works has not, needs not, any mediator.

(7) Because all the following arguments that prove this Sinai Covenant to be a Covenant of Faith do thereupon consequently conclude it not to be a covenant of works.

2nd Opinion:

That the Law Given on Mt. Sinai was a Mixed Covenant, Partly of Works, Partly of Grace

They explain²⁶ themselves to this effect: that the Law was propounded two ways,²⁷ namely:

(I) First, the Moral Law alone, after great preparation of the people, was promulgated immediately by God to Israel with a great voice and in a most terrible manner, and afterwards [it was] somewhat lenified [made lenient]: by Moses writing it with some Ceremonials and Judicials in a Book, by his reading them thence to the people and by covenanting with offering of Sacrifices. After this, God calls Moses again up into the mount, writes the Ten Commandments with his own finger in two tables of stone of his own preparing and sends Moses down with them, open[ly displayed] in his two hands, to the people, who, in Moses' absence, had broken the covenant by idolatry in the matter of Aaron's calf. When Moses saw [this,] he broke the two tables beneath the mount in their sight [in order] to signify their breach of Covenant with God.

This was the first way of propounding the Law, and most rigid [at that], being a perfect and exact draught of the law of prime [first] nature, wherein the Law breathed nothing but wrath to fallen nature, having no grace nor mercy (Jn. 1:17). This [law] exacted perfect obedience to eternal life, threatening the curse to all that continue not in

²⁶ See this opinion laid down more at large by Mr. John Ball in his *Treatise of the Covenant* (London, 1645) ch. 7, p. 95-102. [Ball did not hold to this view, but gives a summary of it and critiques it.]

²⁷ [The second opinion, probably that of the Dutch theological professor Johannes Cocceius, is that the Mosaic Covenant was given twice. The first time it was given as a covenant of works and strict law (Ex. 20 ff.), which was broken almost immediately by the people's idolatry of the golden calf and Moses' breaking of the tablets (Ex. 32). Hence, this covenant was abrogated. After this, God called Moses back up into the mount the second time (Ex. 34) in order to give him two new tables, being a new covenant modified by grace. This gracious covenant, full of pardon, faith and grace, remained till the coming of Christ.

Roberts' main problem with this chronological construction is that it poses two covenants at Sinai contrary to each other. His view is that, while these events show forth important emphases in God's dealings in the Mosaic Covenant with his people, yet the second, renewed administration thereof is the same Covenant as the first administration of it in Ex. 20-24. Thus the whole is one Mosaic Covenant, and that gracious and full of Christ in character, being a Covenant of Faith.]

everything written in the book of the Law, to do it. (Dt. 27:26) This contained a perfect Covenant of Works and stood in full opposition to the Covenant of Grace.

(II) Secondly, the whole frame and economy of Moses' Law was given by him to the people: in a comfortable way,²⁸ or moderation, with promises of pardon to the penitent, of blessings to the obedient, and the tables renewed differently [after being broken] from the former [first administration]. Namely:

1. Now no more terribleness and thundering, nor strictness of preparation.
2. Now the mediator Moses must prepare the tables, and bring them up to God, who would write therein the same words which were in the former.
3. Now Moses must prepare an ark, not only for safe keeping of the tables, but for covering the curse of the Law from the people. Nor must people or priest read the Law out of stone, but as it was mollified [softened and appeased] by Moses' transcription in his books.
4. Now the Lord proclaims all his goodness before Moses (Ex. 34) for the support and encouragement of penitent sinners.
5. Now, Moses coming down, his face shined so gloriously that he put a veil upon it to hide the curse of the Law from the people. Till the Law was in the ark and veiled, etc., the people's hearts and consciences were not quieted.

Thus the Law [upon this view, in its second administration,] was a Covenant of Grace, or subordinate to the Covenant of Grace.

Answer: This opinion, to this effect explained, some do embrace. But this opinion satisfies not, though it be very plausibly represented and diverse things related herein are true, for:

(I) In this twofold proposal of the Law forementioned (the one with rigor, the other with moderation), this opinion supposes two distinct and opposite kinds of Covenants

²⁸ [There is a Greek word here in the original that is unreadable, but it probably means 'comfortable' or 'moderation'.]

to be propounded, namely: a Covenant of Works in the former and a Covenant of Grace in the latter. But this cannot be admitted, for:

1. Moses never speaks of any more covenants made with Israel at Horeb than one. He still calls it a 'covenant' (Ex. 19:5; Dt. 5:2, etc.; 4:13,23; 17:12; 29:1), not 'covenants'.
2. The prophet Jeremiah also (Jer. 11:3-5; 31:31-32) and the apostle Paul, in reciting this Sinai dispensation (Heb. 8,9), speak of it as one single covenant only.
3. The Covenant of Works and the Covenant of Faith, or of Grace, are so essentially opposite and inconsistent one with another, that they cannot be comprised in one and the same Sinai administration. For as the apostle in another case said of God's election (Rom. 11:5-6), so in this case we may say God's Covenant administration:

'If by grace, then it is no more of works, otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace, otherwise work is no more work.' (Rom. 11:16)

(II) The series and order of God's proceeding in this Sinai dispensation of the Law is not so exactly and heedfully observed and related by the authors of this opinion. While they make the first proposal of the Law and inscription thereof in the first tables, to be a most rigid and exact draught of the Law of prime Nature, wherein the Law breathed nothing but wrath to fallen nature without grace and mercy, containing a perfect Covenant of Works opposite to the Covenant of Grace: herein is a great mistake, for:

1. In God's preface before the giving of the Law (Ex. 19:4-6), He gives them an abstract of his Covenant, which He intended as a sweet foretaste of diverse excellent gospel graces and mercies promised to covenant keepers. This some take to be that spiritual contract (Jer. 31:31-32) whereby God espoused Israel to Himself and became a husband to them.
2. In the very preface of the Decalogue, God represents Himself to them as their covenant God and redeemer (Ex. 20:1-2) and in the Second and Fifth Commandments (Ex. 20:6,12) [He] promises mercy to thousands of them that love Him and obey Him and the land of Canaan as a type of the eternal rest in heaven.

3. When the people were terrified by God's immediate voice, so as to see the need of, and sue for, a mediator between God and them (Ex. 20:18-21 with Dt. 5:23 to the end of the chapter; Dt. 28:15-20), God highly commends their desires, gives them a typical mediator, and promises Christ the true Mediator to them.
4. The Lord annexed to the Moral Law many ceremonials typifying Gospel grace and mercy by Jesus Christ (Ex. 20:24-26), besides the body of Judicials (Ex. 21-23): all which Moses rehearsed to the people, and recorded them in a book (Ex. 24:3,4).
5. After this Moses brings all the people below the hill to enter into solemn covenant with God by sacrifices slain, Moses reading the book of the Covenant to the people, and the people expressing their consent, the blood of the sacrifices being sprinkled as the blood of the Covenant (a type of Christ's true Covenant-confirming blood) the one half on the altar, the other half on the people, for ratification of the Covenant (Ex. 24:4-9).
6. This solemnity of the covenant being dispatched, Moses, Aaron and his sons, with seventy elders of Israel, went up into the mount and there had a most gracious vision of God, in representations of divine grace and favor, as their covenant God (Ex. 24:9-11).
7. Moses is called up higher into the mount, and was there with God forty days and forty nights (Ex. 24:12-28), during which time God communed with him and gave him commandments touching the tabernacle and other ceremonials, clear types of Christ and gospel mercies (Ex. 24:18-31:18).

Now all these acts of grace and gospel mercy were manifested before Moses came down with the first tables (Ex. 32). And therefore this part of the proposal of the Law, as it had much terribleness, so also it had much comfortableness and evangelical sweetness evidently imprinted thereon.

(III) That particular, namely, that the veil was put upon Moses' face to hide the curse, is justly exceptionable [objected to], for:

1. The apostle Paul expounds the mystery of it otherwise, namely, that by the shining of Moses' face, was signified, the outward glory of the Mosaic ministration of the Old Testament (2 Cor. 3:7 ff.). And the veil put upon Moses' face did declare both the darkness of that ministration (2 Cor. 3:13-16) in regard of the primary true

and proper end of it, Christ, which (as Calvin says) is *anima legis* the very soul and life of the Law; and also the blindness of the minds of the Jews, that could not see into the bottom of the Law, into the end and scope of that which was to be abolished, but generally rested in the outward letter, and carnal apprehension of the Law. The apostle speaks not a word of veiling the curse of the Law from them (which would have been a mercy), but of veiling the end and scope of the Law from them, which was a great judgment upon them.

2. Many learned and judicious authors thus also understand and interpret the apostle concerning Moses' veil, not at all mentioning any use of it for hiding of the curse. Calvin says²⁹ that after Paul has taught the genuine use of this shining, namely, that the Law might be glorious, he proceeds further that this was a presage [forewarning] of the future blinding of the Jews. He adds [specifies] what was accidental: that the veil was upon Moses' face because it should come to pass that the Jews could not behold the chief thing in the Law, nor attend to the true end thereof, as after Christ's coming their senses were blinded and the veil on them, till Moses should be turned of them to Christ, who is the Soul of the Law. To the like effect also Ainsworth,³⁰ Rivet,³¹ the late *London Annotations*,³² Augustine³³ and others expound this veil on Moses' face.

²⁹ [Commentary on Ex. 34:29](#)

³⁰ Henry Ainsworth, [Annotations on Ex. 34:29](#), etc.

³¹ Andrew Rivet, *Commentary on Ex. 34:29* to the end.

³² *The London Annotations on 2 Cor. 3:13 ff.*

³³ "*Quod autem dictum est de ministro veteris Testamenti Moyse, quod non poterant intendere filii Israel in faciem ejus propter gloriam vultus ejus, Signum erat, quia in lege Christum intellecturi non erant. Et ideo velamen inter faciem Moysis & ipsos positum erat, ut non intenderent, sicut scriptum est, filii Israel usq; in finem. Finis autem legis, quis est? Ad hoc, non ego, sed Apostolis [Apostolus] ipse respondeat. 'Finis enim legis,' inquit, 'Christus, ad justitiam Omni Credenti': Finis perficiens, non interficiens. Finis quippe dicitur, propter quem fiunt omnia quaecunq; fiunt aliquo officio. Nam inter officium & finem hoc distat, quod officium est in eis quae facere debemus; finis, propter quem facimus. Quia itaq; illa omnia propter Christum fiebant, quem filii Israel in eis quae faciebant non intelligebant: hoc significabat velamen, quod eos usq; in finem non sinebat intendere, id est, usq; ad faciem Moysis, quae significabat Christum, etc.*"

[“However, that which is said by Moses, the minister of the Old Covenant, that 'the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold his face for the glory of his countenance,' [cf. 2Cor. 3:7] was a sign that they were not to understand the law of Christ. And so a veil was placed between themselves and the face of Moses, 'that the children of Israel,' as it is written, 'could not steadfastly look to the end of that which is abolished.' [2Cor. 3:13] But the end of the Law, who is it? Concerning this, not I, but the Apostle himself would respond. 'For Christ,' he states, 'is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth.' [Rom. 10:4] A perfecting end, not a destroying end. Obviously, the 'end' meant here is one on account of which absolutely everything is done, rather than what is done from some sort of duty. For between duty and end stands this difference: duty is found in the things we ought to do; an end is found in that because of which we act. So since all of it [the Law] was done with an eye to Christ (whom the Children of Israel did not comprehend in the things that were

made), this veil signified that He did not entirely permit them to behold the end--that is, did not quite permit them to behold Moses' face, which signified Christ..."] Augustine, *Against the Adversaries of the Law and Prophets*, Vol. 2, Chapter 7, Book 6

3rd Opinion:

That the Sinai Covenant, or Old Covenant, was a subservient Covenant to the Covenant of Grace, and preparing thereunto

God made this Covenant with the people Israel at Mt. Sinai to prepare them unto the faith and to inflame them with desire of the promise and evangelical Covenant (which otherwise had languished in their minds) and to restrain them from sin as with a bridle, till the time that He should send the Spirit of adoption into the hearts of his and should govern them by the Law of liberty. This is the opinion of learned John Cameron,³⁴ who does thus further explain himself herein, namely that:

God's Covenant is:

1. Of nature, with man in Innocency;
2. Of grace, with man lapsed [fallen];
3. Subservient to the Covenant of Grace, which in Scripture is called the Old Covenant (Heb. 8:13), the nature and condition whereof cannot more certainly be found out than by comparing it, (1) with the Covenant of Nature, and (2) with the Covenant of Grace.³⁵

(I) With the Covenant of Nature, this Subservient Covenant, or Old Covenant, agrees and differs from it in diverse ways:

1. It agrees herein in that:

- (1) In both the one party contracting is God, the other is man;
- (2) Both have a stipulation annexed;
- (3) The stipulation is the same in respect of the Moral Law;

³⁴ For a bio of John Cameron (1579-1625), see [Wikipedia](#). *Of the Three-fold Covenant of God with Man*, Thesis 7, etc. in *Opuscul. Miscellan.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*, Thesis 42-44, etc.

- (4) The promise is the same in the general;
- (5) Both lead unto Christ.

2. It differs herein in that:

- (1) The Covenant of Nature, was contracted with all men altogether; this [Subservient Covenant], with the Israelites alone.
- (2) The Covenant of Nature was presently made with man created and had no prelude; the Old Covenant long after, and it had many preludes.
- (3) The Covenant of Nature obliged only to obedience due by the Law of Nature; the Old Covenant bound also to ceremonies.
- (4) In both life is promised: there, in the fruition of Paradise; here, in the enjoyment of Canaan.
- (5) Both bring unto Christ. The Covenant of Nature does this not by itself, but by accident; the Old Covenant does this by itself, for its true and proper scope. For God did not enter the Covenant of Nature with men, so that in being pressed with its weight they might sigh after Christ; but the chief and ultimate end of it was this: that man might give to God what was his. But in the Subservient Covenant God requires his right to no other end than that men, convinced of their weakness, might fly unto Christ.
- (6) The Covenant of Nature leans on the creation and general conservation; the subservient Covenant on the election of the people Israel, their deliverance out of Egypt and conservation [perseverance] in the land of Canaan.
- (7) The Covenant of Nature was made that thereby men might be led sweetly, for it was written in their hearts; the Subservient Covenant that men might be even compelled, for it gendered to bondage (Gal. 4:24).
- (8) The Covenant of Nature was eternal; the Old Covenant temporary.
- (9) The Covenant of Nature respected not the restraint of outward wickedness, neither in its principal, nor in its less principal, scope; the Old Covenant had respect this way according to its less principal scope (Ex. 20:20).

(10) The Covenant of Nature was written in the heart; the Old Covenant in tables of stone.

(11) The Covenant of Nature was made in Paradise; the subservient Covenant in Mt. Sinai.

(12) The Covenant of Nature had no mediator; the Subservient Covenant had a mediator: Moses.

(13) The Covenant of Nature was made with men perfect; the Subservient Covenant with part of man lapsed [fallen].

(II) With the Covenant of Grace this Subservient Covenant agrees and differs from it diversely:

1. It agrees with it herein, in that:

- (1) God is the Author of both.
- (2) Both of them are contracted with man a sinner.
- (3) Both show sin.
- (4) Both restrain from sin.
- (5) Both lead to Christ.
- (6) Both of them are a symbol of the church of God.
- (7) Both of them are a covenant through a mediator.
- (8) In both life is promised.

2. It differs from the Covenant of Grace herein:

(1) In the habitude³⁶ of the Author. For in the subservient Covenant God is considered as reproofing sin and approving righteousness alone, but in the Covenant of Grace as pardoning sin and renewing in man a new righteousness.

(2) In the stipulation. For the stipulation of the Old Covenant is this: 'Do this, and thou shalt live.' (Gal. 3:12) Of the New: believe, and thou shalt not come into condemnation (John 3:18).

³⁶ [disposition of habit]

(3) In Antiquity. For the Subservient Covenant was added to the promises of grace which went before (Gal. 3:16-17,19).

(4) In the manner of showing sin. For the Subservient Covenant does not show sin primarily, but by experience of human imbecility (Rom. 7) in keeping that Covenant throughout; but the Covenant of Grace does this primarily, for it teaches expressly man to be a sinner (Rom. 3:9-23) and his happiness to be placed in the remission of sins (Rom. 4:6, etc.).

(5) The Subservient Covenant restrains from sin, but with coercion [external force] (Rom. 7:22-24); the Covenant of Grace with a free inclination of the soul (Rom. 6).

(6) Both bring to Christ. The Covenant of Grace directly, the Subservient Covenant indirectly.

(7) Both are a symbol of the church. The Old Covenant is a carnal symbol of the Jewish Church, but the Covenant of Grace is a spiritual symbol of the church of the Gentiles as well as of the Jews.

(8) Both Covenants are made through a mediator. The mediator of the Old Covenant is the man Moses; The Mediator of the New Covenant is not feeble man, but θεανθρωπος, *theanthropos*, 'God-man', Christ.

(9) In the Old Covenant the spirit of bondage was given (Gal. 4:24-25), but in the Covenant of Grace: the Spirit of adoption (Rom. 8:15).

(10) The Old Covenant was a means to the end; the Covenant of Grace: the end.

(11) The Old Covenant terrified the consciences; the New: comforts.

(12) The object of the Old Covenant is man fallen asleep in sin; of the New: the conscience terrified with sin.

(13) The Old Covenant showed the way of worshipping God, but performed it not; the New Covenant does both.

(14) The Old Covenant was a handwriting against us (Col. 2:14), but the New, a refreshing and easy yoke (Matt 11:28).

(15) The Old Covenant was given from the terrible Mt. Sinai (Heb. 12:18-24); the New: from the heavenly, amiable and delectable Zion (Ps. 2:6).

(16) The Old Covenant excludes the gentiles; the New admits them.

(17) Lastly, this difference is added by some: that seeing life is promised in both, here [in the Subservient Covenant] life seems to be promised in the Land of Canaan; here [in the Covenant of Grace:] in Heaven.

Hence by way of corollary, he [Cameron] adds this definition of the Old [Subservient] Covenant: the Old Covenant is that whereby God requires of the people Israel the obedience of the Moral, Ceremonial, and Political Law, and to the performers: promises all manner of blessings in the possession of the land of Canaan; but contrariwise, to the violators: severely threatens curses and death, and that to this end, that He might lead them to the Messiah that was to come.

Thus Cameron.

Answer: Though this be the opinion of a learned author, yet it does not satisfy, as it is justly liable to sundry exceptions: (I) Some more general, (II) Some more particular:

(I) More general exceptions against this opinion thus stated, are these, namely:

1. That the Covenant of Nature, the Covenant of Grace, and the Subservient Covenant or old Covenant, are made three distinct sorts or kinds of Covenant essentially and specifically different one from another, and yet:

(1) The Covenant of Nature before the Fall and the Covenant subservient at Mt. Sinai, are both of them made a covenant of works, having one and the same stipulation in respect of the Moral Law, 'Do this and live'. The division of a genus into its species must be into members specifically distinct and opposite; but these are coincident.

(2) Besides, the Subservient, or Old Covenant, is not a covenant of works (as I have already proved), nor is the stipulation of it, 'Do this and live', opposite to the stipulation of the Covenant of Grace, 'Believe and live', the Old Covenant being one

distinct dispensation of the Covenant of Grace (as will afterward appear). So that the subservient Covenant and Covenant of Grace, are coincident.

Therefore, his first distribution of God's Covenant into these three kinds (two whereof, namely, the Covenant of Nature and the Subservient Covenant, he himself makes coincident, and two whereof, na

mely, the Subservient or Old Covenant, and the Covenant of Grace, are in their own nature coincident) is a distribution neither logical nor theological.

2. That by this distribution of God's Covenant with man into these three kinds, the clear order of God's covenant administrations is obscured and inverted.

[On the contrary,] This [following] was evidently the Lord's way:

With man, perfect in God's image, He made a Covenant of Works, or a Covenant of Nature, which, by mere natural concreated³⁷ abilities man could in his own person perfectly fulfill.

With man lapsed [fallen] from this first Covenant of Works, He makes a Covenant of Faith in Jesus Christ:

Partly as promised, more and more clearly by certain steps and degrees as the church grew riper and the exhibition of Christ nearer. These gradual promises and covenants are called 'covenants of promise.' (Eph. 2:12)

Partly as performed, in the fullness of time in human flesh. So He gives his last and clearest federal dispensation, the New Covenant, or New Testament, to continue to the world's end.

In this way all things are most clear, and in beautiful order.

But this [other] opinion [of Cameron's], setting forth first the Covenant of Nature with perfect man, then the Covenant of Grace with lapsed man, then the Covenant-Subservient as a Covenant of Works, and last of all the Covenant of Grace again in these latter days, obscures the Lord's dispensations, which are clear, and disorders them that

³⁷ [created-with]

are orderly, as if the Lord did do and undo, went backward and forward, in his federal administrations.

3. That, all these three distinct kinds of Covenants are said to lead unto Christ. This is a paradox. For the Covenant of Works, exacting perfect and perpetual personal obedience from man in the perfect state, knows no mediator, needs no mediator, and in case of non-performance, denounces without mercy, without any place for repentance. Had not the Covenant of Faith been revealed after the Fall to lead to Christ, the Covenant of Works had left man utterly desperate and remediless, not affording to lapsed man the least glimmering of a mediator. This is the primary and most essential difference between the Covenant of Works and the Covenant of Faith, that the Covenant of Works assures of life upon man's own mere perfect and perpetual, personal obedience; the Covenant of Faith assures of life upon faith in Christ the sinner's surety and his obedience.

(II) More particular exceptions against this opinion (to mention no more) are these seven, namely that:

1. Herein the Covenant of Grace and New Covenant are spoken of as one and the same, and yet the Covenant of Grace, or New Covenant, is said to be more ancient than the Subservient, or Old Covenant, whereas the Covenant of Grace differs from the New Covenant as the species from the *individuum* [individual], as the kind of covenant from one individual administration of that kind. And if the Covenant of Grace and New Covenant be taken as equivalent and convertible terms, so the Covenant of Grace is not more ancient than the Subservient, or Old Covenant, the New Covenant succeeding the Old.

2. It considers God in the Old Subservient Covenant only as reproofing sin and approving righteousness, but not as pardoning or renewing righteousness in man. Whereas, God is also considered and represented in this Old Covenant as:

(1) Pardoning sin. Witness: his name proclaimed at the renewing of the tables, pardoning iniquity transgression and sin (Ex. 34:6-7); his often pardoning of Israel from their coming out of Egypt (Numb. 14:19-20), and the blood of sacrifices ordained under this Covenant administration which led that people to the true blood of Jesus Christ that cleanses from all sin (Heb. 9:12-14 ff.; 1 John 1:7).

(2) Renewing righteousness in man. Witness: God's promise in his preface to this Covenant, 'and ye shall be unto Me a peculiar treasure, a kingdom of priests and a holy nation' (Ex. 19:5-6); his promise annexed to this Covenant, 'to circumcise their heart and the heart of their seed to the Lord, etc.' (Dt. 30:6); and the many ceremonial washings, purifications, etc., shadowing out the spiritual washing by the Holy Ghost.

3. It makes man the only party contracting with God in the Old Covenant, whereas the party contracting with God in every dispensation and period of the Covenant of Faith (whereof this Old Covenant is one) is Jesus Christ and his spiritual seed, as has been already evidenced.³⁸

4. According to this opinion, as life in Paradise was the only life promised in the Covenant of Nature, so life in the possession of Canaan was all the life promised in the Subservient or Old Covenant. Whereas (not to dispute about the life in Paradise):

(1) Under life in Canaan was showed our eternal life, life in heaven, Canaan being a type of heaven (as has been formerly made manifest).³⁹

(2) The fathers (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, etc.) to whom God gave the inheritance of Canaan by promise, lived 'as pilgrims and strangers in the land of promise, declaring plainly thereby that they sought a better country, that is a heavenly [country].' (Heb. 11:9,14-16)

(3) This entrenches too near the borders of Socinianism that under Moses the fathers had only earthly and temporal blessings.

5. It makes Moses alone the Mediator of the Old Testament, whereas:

(1) Moses was only the typical mediator; Christ the true typified Mediator (as Moses plainly intimates, Dt. 18:15-20). And Christ's blood (typified in the blood of sacrifices) was the principal blood that made it a testament.

³⁸ In [Book 2, Ch. 2, Aphorism 2](#)

³⁹ In [Book 3, Ch. 3](#)

(2) Whereas it is said, 'the Law was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator' (Gal. 3:18), it is much questioned by some whether that mediator was not indeed Jesus Christ Himself, and not Moses.

6. It asserts that the Old Covenant leads to Christ indirectly, whereas:

(1) Every expression of the Covenant of Faith (among which this old Covenant is one) led to Christ directly, though darkly. The further from Christ, the darker; the nearer to Christ, still the clearer. Christ being the primary scope, end, and intention of them all.

(2) [Where] The apostle says, 'Christ was the end of the Law' (Rom. 10:4), the very chief scope and intention thereof, and the Law was the Jews' 'schoolmaster to bring them to Christ, etc.' (Gal. 3:24), understand [by 'Law':] Moses, his whole dispensation. Which, partly by detecting sin and misery, partly by typifying the remedy, it led most excellently to Christ the Mediator.

7. This opinion makes it peculiar to the Old Covenant to terrify the consciences; to the New Covenant, to comfort them, whereas it is evident:

(1) That though the Old Covenant has much more servitude and terror in it than the New, yet it is not only and wholly terror, for:

A. The promises were prefixed before the promulgation;

B. There was a preface to, and promises in, the Moral Law itself;

C. They had a sweet vision of God when the Covenant was now newly established;

D. The glorious back-parts of God were proclaimed at renewing of the Covenant;

E. The mystery of Christ was shadowed out in the Ceremonial Law;

F. The many promises affixed to this dispensation do flow (like the land of Canaan) with milk and honey, with sweet streams of soul-reviving consolations.

(2) That though the New Covenant do more abundantly comfort the conscience than the Old, yet therein also are corrosives as well as cordials: thunder and lightnings in severe threats against impenitent unbelievers, as well as a small still voice of promises and consolations to penitent believers.

By these things we may see what to think of this third opinion or interpretation.

4th Opinion:

That this Sinai Covenant was for Substance indeed, and in Truth,
a Covenant of Grace, or a Covenant of Faith

...though for circumstance and manner of administration it seems at the first aspect to be otherwise, being published and dispensed in an altogether unusual way of majesty, glory, terror, rigor, servitude, and bondage to the people Israel, yet most necessary, suitable and accommodated to that time, people, and condition of the infant church.

This opinion and interpretation some have pitched upon, and I am abundantly convinced in my judgment that it is the undoubted truth. For evincing [proving] whereof more satisfactorily I shall:

- (I) Show that this Sinai Covenant was dispensed in an altogether unusual way in comparison of all other federal administrations foregoing or following it;
- (II) Declare how this unusual way of administration of the Sinai Covenant was then, and to that people, most apposite [suitable] and accommodated notwithstanding;
- (III) Lay down certain grounds and reasons why this Sinai Covenant was a Covenant of Faith and was so given;
- (IV) Answer such objections of any moment or consequence as are made to the contrary.

(I) That this Sinai Covenant was dispensed in an altogether unusual way in comparison of all other federal administrations before or after it, will appear by this brief parallel between it and them, namely:

1. The place was unusual: in an uninhabited wilderness (Ex. 19:1 ff.), the desolate wilderness of Sinai, where God and Israel were alone, separate from all the world. No other federal dispensation was in a wilderness.

2. The preparation of the people to it, with such strictness and caution and rigor was altogether unusual (Ex. 19). No such preparations are recorded before any other Covenant.
3. The promulgation of it was wholly unusual: with thunders, lightnings, thick-cloud, darkness, sound of trumpet, Mt. Sinai 'quaking greatly and burning with fire to the heart of heaven, out of the midst of which fire the Lord uttered his Law with a great voice which shook the very earth, etc.' (Ex. 19:16-19 ff.; 20:18-19 ff.; Dt. 5:22 ff.; Heb. 12:18-21) Oh how dreadful and terrible was this promulgation! So that all Israel trembled for fear, and stood a far off, and Moses himself did exceedingly fear and quake. Never was a covenant dispensed, before or after, with such terror and amazement.
4. The condition of it imposed on the people was imposed altogether unusually: faith in Christ being imposed very obscurely, but obedience from that faith being urged most exactly and particularly, both in Morals, Ceremonials, and Judicials. The like exactness and particularity is not expressed in any Covenant, the Lord usually propounding the stipulation required from his people in more brief and general expressions.
5. The number of covenanters was unusual: All Israel being brought forth to meet with God below the mount (Ex. 19:17,24), who were 603,550 'warriors of 20 years old and upwards, besides women and children.' (Ex. 30:12-14; 38:26; Num. 2:46) When were such a number convened at once, at any other time, [in order] to enter into Covenant with God?
6. The solemn sanction of the Covenant by killing of sacrifices, and sprinkling their blood as the blood of the Covenant, half on the altar, and half on the people, was wholly unusual (Ex. 24:4-9). Some such thing was done darkly and more imperfectly when God made Covenant with Abraham (Gen. 15:9-11,17-18), but this was done most completely and clearly.
7. The writing of the matter of the Covenant was wholly unusual: God Himself writing the Ten Commandments in two tables of stone, once and again (Ex. 31:18; 34:1,28), and Moses recording both Morals, Ceremonials and Judicials in a book (Ex. 24:3-4,7). When were there such Covenant rolls and records in any other dispensation?

8. The ordaining or disposing of this Covenant by angels in the hand of a typical mediator (Gal. 3:19), Moses, was altogether unusual, no other Covenant mentioning a typical mediator.

9. The renewing of this Covenant, when the people had broken it by idolatry, was wholly unusual: God renewing it, with proclamation of all his goodness and with the manifestation of outward glory, signified by the shining of Moses' countenance. The like we find not in other Covenant expressions.

10. Finally, the keeping of this Covenant in the ark, under the mercy-seat, was altogether unusual (Ex. 25:16; 40:20): no other Covenant besides this being kept in the ark of the Covenant.

In all these regards this Sinai Covenant was dispensed in an unusual way respective to other Covenants.

(II) This unusual way of the Sinai Covenant's administration was, notwithstanding, most apposite [suitable] and accommodated to that time and people; and that in diverse respects, for:

1. The people of Israel (having for diverse generations been born and brought up in Egypt, a pagan, ignorant idolatrous land, without the knowledge, worship and fear of the true God) must needs be very ignorant of the true God and of his ways. The Lord therefore so dispensed his Covenant to them, having brought them out of Egypt, as to make Himself more truly and clearly known to them in his invisible spiritualness, majesty, glory, greatness, power, dominion, holiness, righteousness, terror, goodness, mercy, grace, truth, and in such of his other perfections, [in order] to make known also his whole way of worship and service unto them, whether Moral or Ceremonial, that by his Law as a rule of religion and life, they as his Covenant people might be directed how to walk before God acceptably in holiness and righteousness in Christ, in order to their inheriting of God's gracious promises. For which end the Lord incorporated his Law and Gospel together.

For, as one well observes,⁴⁰ 'The Law was never given or made positive without the Gospel, neither is the Gospel now without the Law: Although the Old Testament be usually called the Law, and the New, the Gospel, because the Law is predominant in the one and the Gospel in the other.'

2. Since man's Fall the world had not been so thoroughly convinced of the sinfulness of sin, wherein they were involved; No, nor yet Israel, that had only lived in that sinful Egyptian [land]. 'Before the Law, sin was in the world: but sin was not imputed, when there was no Law.' (Rom. 5:13) God imputed it to impenitent sinners, and believers imputed sin to themselves imperfectly, but the generality of the world, yea of Israel, in effect, did not impute sin to themselves, or charge sin upon themselves, so as to drive them out of themselves to the promised Seed, and to the true Passover and Sacrifice, Christ, for remedy.

God therefore so dispensed this Sinai-Covenant to them as to let them see: exactly the sinfulness of sin for kind, degree, and aggravation in the Moral Law; the deadly and damnable nature of sin in the curse of the Law and in the blood of slain sacrifices; as also the terror of the Lord against sinners without a mediator. 'The Law entered that the offence might abound' (Rom 5:20). 'By the Law is the knowledge of sin' (Rom. 3:20). 'The Law was added because of transgression, till the seed should come, to whom the promise was made' (Gal. 3:19). 'The scripture (especially the Law) has concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe' (Gal. 3:22).

3. Israel was now a most numerous people, a mighty nation, being 603,550 able warriors of twenty years old and upwards, besides women and all children under twenty, and all these without any established order or government amongst them. It was no small matter that would subdue and subjugate so great a people, make them tractable [easily managed and controlled]. God therefore makes known this Covenant to them with such unparalleled discoveries of his majesty, supremacy and greatness, as made all that mighty people to quake and tremble, and promise all obedience unto God.

4. Israel were naturally a stubborn stiffnecked and rebellious people against the Lord. Moses tells Israel to their face, 'Thou art a stiffnecked people... from the day that thou didst depart out of the land of Egypt, until ye came to this place, ye have been rebellious against the Lord.' (Dt. 9:6,7-25) Then, enumerating their rebellions, he concludes: 'Ye

⁴⁰ John Ball, *Treatise of the Covenant* (London, 1645) ch. 7, p. 102

have been rebellious against the Lord from the day that I knew you.' (v, 24) God therefore, that He might tame and keep their sturdy necks and rebellious hearts under, imposed this Covenant upon them as a heavy, intolerable yoke till Christ, to humble and bow them under the burden, rigor and bondage of it.

5. They, being ignorant of God's righteousness in Christ, sought to establish their own righteousness by doing (Rom. 10:2-3). They idolized and rested in their self-righteousness. God therefore so disposed this Covenant as to strip them of all their imaginary righteousness, detect their sin, shame, nakedness and wretchedness, that they might not have any confidence in themselves, but only in Christ, the end of the Law for righteousness, to everyone that believes (Rom. 10:4).

6. They were a people generally very weak, childish, carnal, and dull in their apprehensions of spirituals, especially of the mystery of Christ, being like a child in minor, under age. (Gal. 4:1-5) The Lord therefore put them, as children under age, under tutors and governors, namely, the elements or rudiments and carnal ordinances of the Ceremonial Law (Heb. 9:10), wherein (as in their A-B-C's of Christianity, they might learn to spell out Christ and sinners' salvation by Him, till they should come to the ripeness of age in the fullness of time when Christ Himself was actually revealed. They could not ascend to Christ's spirituality; God condescends to their carnality.

7. Israel was now grown up beyond the compass of a private family or domestic Church, to the capacity of being molded and formed into a national church. The Lord, therefore, so dispensed this Sinai Covenant to them as at once to constitute them a national body politic, both ecclesiastical and civil: a church (called 'the church in the wilderness,' Acts 7:38) and a 'commonwealth' of Israel (Eph. 2:12); a political church and an ecclesiastical polity. He sweetly twisted them together as inseparable twins, by compacting his Laws, Moral, Ceremonial and Judicial (which were constitutive of their church and commonwealth) into one Covenant.

Thus the Lord in his singular wisdom accommodated this Sinai Covenant to the then present capacity and condition of Israel.

(III) Although this Sinai Covenant had such an unusual administration that it might be accommodated to the state of God's church and people in those times till Christ should be

revealed, yet notwithstanding it was dispensed and given as a Covenant of Faith and grace in Jesus Christ. This may be strongly evinced [proved] by these ensuing grounds and reasons, namely:

1. Because the Sinai Covenant is for substance one and the same with the Covenant made with the fathers: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This is evident by two testimonies (to mention no more), namely:

(1) By that promise of God to keep the Covenant and mercy with them, which He had sworn to their fathers, if they should keep his commandments, statutes, and judgments:

‘Thou shalt keep the commandments, and the statutes, and the judgments, which I command thee this day, to do them. Wherefore it shall come to pass, if you hearken to these judgments, and keep and do them; that the Lord your God shall keep unto you the Covenant and the Mercy which He swore unto your fathers’ (Dt. 7:11-12).

Their keeping of this Sinai Covenant has the promise of God’s keeping to them, and performing to them, his Covenant and mercy sworn to their fathers. Therefore this Sinai Covenant and that Covenant made with their fathers, held forth and promised unto them the same mercy and [thus,] are, for substance, the same kind of Covenant.

(2) By that passage in the Covenant made with Israel in the land of Moab (Dt. 29:1 ff., which is the same with the Sinai Covenant, being a part of it renewed):

‘Ye stand this day all of you before the Lord your God; That thou shouldst enter into Covenant with the Lord thy God, and into his oath, which the Lord thy God makes with thee this day. That He may establish thee today for a people unto Himself, and that He may be unto thee a God, as He has said unto thee, and as He has sworn unto your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.’ (Dt. 29:10-13)

This speaks clearly and fully to the point, that by this Covenant He would be their God and they should be his people, as He had sworn to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, that is, according to the tenor of his Covenant with Abraham, etc. So that this confirms God’s former Covenant with Abraham, and the same Covenant interest [legal right] between God and Abraham with his seed, in the same way as He had sworn to Abraham, etc. Therefore these Covenants were one and the same for substance.

Consequently, this Sinai Covenant was a Covenant of Faith, for God's Covenant with the fathers, Abraham, etc. was a Covenant of Faith, as I have at large evidenced in that Covenant period.

2. Because the preparatory abstract, or summary abridgement of the Sinai Covenant (premised by God for the better preparing of Israel for the promulgation of the Law and Covenant at Sinai) briefly insinuates that the Sinai Covenant intended should be a Covenant of Faith. God gives them a brief hint of his intention and purpose, and what He was now about to do with them, namely, that He was about to enter into a most solemn Covenant with them, and that a Covenant of Faith and Grace in Christ, promising evangelical privileges therein unto them:

'The Lord called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Israel; ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagle's wings, and brought you unto Myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep Covenant, ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people, for all the earth is mine. And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation.' (Ex. 19:3-6)

These words I have already distributed [parsed out] and explicated formerly; there see.⁴¹ Now I only add that God being about to enter into Covenant with them, gives them herein a breviate [an abbreviation], a precious taste of his Covenant:

1. On their part: they must obey his voice, and be faithful in his Covenant.
2. On his part: God would accept them as his peculiar treasure, a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation. In themselves they were the sinful seed of lapsed Adam, but here God looks upon them in Christ, and promises such pure evangelical mercies as cannot befall lapsed sinners, but only in and through Christ. For Jesus Christ is 'the Prince of the kings of the earth'. It's He 'that has loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and has made us kings and priests unto God and his Father' (Rev. 1:5-6). Hence, Peter reckoning up the Gospel privileges of believers in Christ, says, 'But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, etc.' (1 Pet. 5:9-10)

Hence, these pure Gospel blessings in Christ do necessarily infer a pure Gospel Covenant at Sinai promising them.

⁴¹ In this chapter, [Aphorism 1, Question 3, Particular 1, p. 677](#)

3. Because the Covenant relation between God and Israel established by this Sinai Covenant is substantially one and the same with that of the Covenant of Faith. Consequently, the Covenants are the same. This is the covenant relation established between God and men by the Covenant of Faith: 'I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people.' (Jer. 31:33 with Heb. 8:10; Eze. 36:28) This same relation also is established between God and Israel by this Sinai Covenant, for:

(1) The Covenant made with them in the land of Moab (which was only some part of the Sinai Covenant repeated) expresses this Covenant relation plainly:

'that He may establish thee today for a people unto Himself, and that He may be unto thee a God, as He has sworn to thy fathers, to Abraham, etc.' (Dt. 29:11-13)

So that this Covenant relation is hereby established as it was sworn to Abraham, namely, upon the same terms: in Christ through faith.

(2) The prophet Jeremiah also evidently confirms this, saying:

'Thus says the Lord God of Israel, Cursed be the man that obeys not the words of this Covenant, which I commanded your fathers in the day that I brought them forth out of the land of Egypt from the iron furnace, saying, Obey my voice, and do them, according to all which I command you. So shall ye be my people, and I will be your God, etc.' (Jer. 11:3-5 with Lev. 26:3,12)

How can the Lord be a Covenant God to sinners, or sinners be a covenant people to God, but only in Christ by faith? For it's only Christ, according to God's Covenant and promises, that brings God and sinners into union and communion, whom sin had divided. Therefore this evangelical Covenant relation between God and Israel, established by this Sinai Covenant, proves this Covenant to be a Covenant of Faith.

4. Because the preface to the Decalogue and the First Commandment, judiciously considered and compared together, contain in them summarily the Covenant of Faith for substance:

(1) The preface to the Decalogue (which some count the reason of the First Commandment, set before the commandment, as the reasons of the four following commandments are set after. Nor matters it as to the force of my present argument whichever way we refer it) has in it three great arguments or reasons enforcing to

obedience, 'I am the Lord, thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of servants' (Ex. 20:1-2):

A. That He is Jehovah. This is God's chief essential name, setting forth his nature more fully than any one word in the Hebrew, or any other language under heaven. It's derived from, 'being', and it implies:

(A) God's supreme eternal independent unalterable Being, in and of Himself alone.

(B) God's giving being to all beings. He is the fountain of all beings.

(C) God's giving actual existence, subsistence and being to his decrees and with promissory or minatory [threatening]. Hence, when the time drew near that Israel was to be delivered out of Egypt, to go to inherit the land of Canaan, according to his Covenant and promises to Abraham, etc., God said, 'I am Jehovah, and I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by my name Jehovah was I not known to them, etc.,' (Ex. 6:2-5 ff.), that is:

I declared Myself to them to be an almighty, all-sufficient God in my Covenant and promises, and though Covenanted blessings were not actually performed to them, yet I Myself was their all-sufficiency against all wants, but I declared not Myself a Covenant performing God, a Jehovah to them, making my promises actually to subsist, in actually redeeming them out of Egypt and bringing them into Canaan. Though they all knew Me by my name Jehovah doctrinally, yet did they not know me by it experimentally. But now I am come to make Myself known experimentally to Israel to be Jehovah, in fulfilling my Covenant and promise to Abraham in his seed.

B. That He is Israel's God, your God. Not by common creation or providential conservation [preservation] only, as He is even to the wicked, but by special Covenant, made formerly with their fathers.

C. That He is their Redeemer, typically from Egypt's thralldom; spiritually from sin and Satan's thralldom shadowed out thereby: As is clear from

the Passover, a means of their deliverance from Egypt (Ex. 12:11-13,21-23) and a clear type of Christ (1 Cor. 5:7).

Now these three arguments prefixed to the Law notably proclaim the Law, this Sinai Covenant, to be a Covenant of Faith in Christ. For, God as Jehovah performs his Covenant and promise to Abraham and his seed only in Christ (2 Cor. 1:20), is Israel's Covenant God only in Christ, and is Israel's Redeemer only in Christ.

(2) The First Commandment also speaks this further. The affirmative part of it is, 'Thou shalt have Me, the Lord, to be thy God only, and worship Me as thy God.' (Ex. 20:3) Now, since the fall, how can any have, or worship, the Lord as their God, without faith in Jesus Christ? Without faith in Christ it's impossible in anything to please God (Heb. 11:6). Without faith in Christ, love cannot be acted towards God, for 'faith works by love' (Gal. 5:6). Without faith in Christ, no man's heart can be purified (Acts 15:9), and God cannot be purely worshipped by an impure heart. That covenant which necessarily requires faith in Christ, must needs be a Covenant of Faith in Christ.

5. Because the Law was given in such sort and manner⁴² that he that runs may read that God fully intended it, and peculiarly gave it, as a Covenant of Faith in Jesus Christ. Besides what has been formerly laid down, these things are pregnant to evince this, namely:

(1) The terror and exactness which God observed in giving of the Law was exceedingly great (Ex. 19:16,19; 20:1-22), that hereby God might convince the people of their own utter impotency and inability to deal with God and his Law immediately by themselves without a Mediator. God and his Law were so clothed with thunder, lightning and fire at the first publication of the Covenant, that they were not able to hear it any more without a mediator.

(2) The terrified people cry out a mediator between God and them, and desire that Moses might be this mediator (Ex. 20:18,19 ff.; Dt. 5:22-33). Hereupon God highly commends their request, grants Moses (according to their desire) to be their mediator, and afterwards still spoke to Israel mediately by him. And

⁴² See formerly in [Aphorism 1, Question 3](#)

in Moses, the type, God promises Jesus Christ the antitype (Dt. 18:50-20) and only true mediator.

(3) The Ceremonial Law is presently annexed to the Moral as part of the Sinai Covenant (Ex. 20:22-26; Ex. 25-32), to instruct them yet further in the deep mystery of this blessed Prophet and Mediator promised, Christ Jesus. The ark, mercy-seat, golden altar of incense, table of show-bread, altar of burnt offering, the veil of the Tabernacle, the Tabernacle itself, the priests, the sacrifices of all sorts and their bloods, the purifications, washings, etc., all being but 'shadows of good things to come, but the body: Christ,' (Heb. 10:1; Col. 2:16,17) whose person, office, condition, effects of his office, etc., were typified and shadowed out to the people in these things.

Thus the Law was contrived to be their 'schoolmaster to bring them to Christ, that they might be justified by faith' (Gal. 3:24): the Moral Law chiefly by scourging and correcting them; the Ceremonial Law chiefly by directing them. I say 'chiefly' because the Moral Law, having some glimmerings of Christ in it, did in some sort also direct them, and the Ceremonial did also correct them (as being a yearly and daily remembrancer of their sin and guilt). The perfection of the Moral Law, whereof they could not but come short, forced them to seek a mediator. 'The imperfection of the Ceremonial Law', which [Law] in itself 'made nothing perfect' (Heb. 7:19), but typically pointed further, namely, to Christ, helped them to find a Mediator.

(4) The Ceremonial and Judicial Laws, being added to the Moral and all written in the book of the covenant (Ex. 24:3-9), are solemnly read in the hearing of Israel and publicly stablished for a covenant with the consent of federates in a testamentary form by the slaying of sacrifices and sprinkling of blood (half upon the altar and half upon the people), Moses saying, 'Behold the blood of the covenant that the Lord has made with you concerning all these words' (Ex. 24:8). This manner of solemn sanction of the Sinai Covenant by sacrifices and sprinkling of blood (types of Christ the true Sacrifice and of his blood, whereby the 'everlasting covenant' was established as a testament by the Testator's death, Heb. 9:13-28; 13:20), I say, this sanction shows it to be a Covenant of Faith in Christ's death.

(5) The seventy elders, with Moses, Aaron and his sons, had a sweet vision of God as presently well-pleased with Israel upon this federal establishment:

‘Then went up Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel. And they saw the God of Israel and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in its clearness. And upon the nobles of the children of Israel He laid not his hand. Also they saw God, and did eat and drink’ (Ex. 24:9-11).

These words I have formerly explained.⁴³ The seventy elders representing all Israel, now being brought into Covenant with God, and thereupon appearing nearer to God by Moses the mediator, beheld God, without fear, hurt or danger. Yea they beheld Him as smiling, not as frowning, under his feet being a clear heaven, a token of favor, not a dark cloudy heaven, a token of displeasure (Jer. 4:23,28; Zeph. 1:15) without Moses the mediator. And before their entering into Covenant with God, God was terribly represented to them in devouring fire. But after their entering into Covenant, and [that] with Moses the mediator, God was comfortably and sweetly represented to them in a clear heaven. How serene, bright and clear is God’s countenance to his covenant people in Jesus Christ!

(6) The people having ‘broken covenant’ with God (Ex. 33:1 ff.), most grossly by idolatry in Moses’ absence, the Lord brings them to a sense of their heinous sin and to humiliation and repenting for it by denying his wonted [accustomed] presence in the midst of them, and by Moses pitching the Tabernacle without the camp.

(7) Israel repenting of their idolatry and covenant breaking, ‘the Lord proclaims Himself’ most comfortably and evangelically to ‘Moses, as pardoning iniquity transgression and sin’ to the penitent, but by ‘no means clearing the guilty’ impenitent, and renews the same Covenant again with them, repairing the tables and receiving them into wonted favor (Ex. 34:1-7).

Now all these passages, in the manner of giving the Sinai Covenant (to mention no more), are pregnant indications that it was intended and given as a Covenant of Faith in Jesus Christ. For, what else can be clearly collected from this way and order of God’s dispensation?:

(1) The promulgation is exact and terrible, forcing them to cry out for a mediator.

⁴³ [Aphorism 1, Question 3, Particular 6, p. 678](#)

(2) Their request for a mediator is commended by God highly, and granted presently: Moses being given as a typical mediator; Christ being promised as the true mediator.

(3) The Ceremonial Law is added to, and inserted in, the Covenant, to instruct them familiarly in the deep mystery of Jesus Christ the Mediator.

(4) The solemn sanction of the Covenant was by the death and blood of sacrifices shadowing out Christ's Covenant confirming death and blood.

(5) They presently had a sweet vision of God as serene and favorable upon the solemnity of the Covenant, they approaching nearer to God with Moses their mediator.

(6) God reduced them to humiliation and repentance for their breach of Covenant.

(7) And God renewed the Tables and Covenant again with them upon their repenting.

These things were brought to pass not accidentally, but intentionally. They were not bare outward transactions, but were full of inward mysteriousness. And the chief mystery in the whole series of this administration is Jesus Christ, the soul of the Law and Covenant. Therefore these steps of God's proceedings in this Covenant administration are to me a clear and cogent argument that this Sinai Covenant was a Covenant of Faith.

6. Because the mutual stipulation between the federates in this Sinai Covenant is in substance one and the same with the stipulation in the Covenant of Faith, namely, on God's part: gracious promises of Gospel mercies; on Israel's part: restipulation of Gospel duties.

(1) God on his part in this Sinai Covenant stipulates and promises many gospel mercies and blessings, as:

A. To be their God in Covenant, in and through Jesus Christ promised (Ex. 20:2; Lev. 16:12; Jer. 11:4; Dt. 18:15-20), this being the highest fundamental Gospel promise, which virtually and eminently comprises in it all the rest.

B. To vouchsafe them his peculiar presence, favor, and fellowship: 'and I will set my Tabernacle amongst you, and my soul shall not abhor you, and I will walk among you, and will be your God' (Lev. 26:11-12).

C. To make and accept them to Himself as 'a peculiar treasure above all people, a kingdom of priests and a holy nation' (Ex. 9:5-6).

D. To give them Canaan, 'a land flowing with milk and honey', according to his oath and promise to their fathers (Ex. 20:12; Dt. 7:12; Jer. 11:4-5; Dt. 8:7-9), under Canaan typically promising Heaven itself, the eternal inheritance and rest.

E. To add unto them, keeping his Covenant, a confluence of all outward blessings and enjoyments as appendices to his Covenant (Lev. 26:3-11; Dt. 7:12-25; Dt. 28:1-15). God promises to superadd temporals to spirituals. Godliness has the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.

(2) Israel, on their part, in this Sinai Covenant, promises and restipulates diverse Gospel duties imposed by God upon them, as:

A. To be his people (Ex. 19:5; Lev. 26:12; Jer. 11:4); to be wholly and solely his, this, the highest duty they can restipulate.

B. To believe in God and in Jesus Christ. This is implied in the First Commandment, as I have already showed. For, Israel could not have the Lord alone as their Covenant God but by faith in Jesus Christ the Messiah and Mediator, in whom alone sinners are brought near unto God in Covenant.

Faith in Christ is also necessarily intimated in the right use of all the Ceremonial worship and service, and in the accepting of Christ 'the mediator, and prophet, like Moses' (Dt. 18:15-20) promised to them.

C. To 'love God' entirely over all 'with all their heart, with all their soul and with all their might. And to love their neighbor as their self' (Dt. 6:4-5; Lev. 19:18).

D. To 'obey the Lord' sincerely and fully 'in all things' which He commanded them (Ex. 24:3,7).

These, and like stipulations between God and Israel in this Sinai Covenant, are purely evangelical. Therefore the Sinai Covenant itself must needs be a Covenant of Faith.

7. Because of the sacramental tokens and seals annexed to God's Covenant with Abraham (which was a Covenant of Faith), namely: circumcision and the Passover, which are continued still under this Sinai Covenant even till the very death of Jesus Christ.

Circumcision was added to God's Covenant with Abraham at the solemn making of that Covenant (Gen. 17:9-15). The Passover (Ex. 12) was also annexed to the same Covenant when God was to bring Israel out of Egypt, judge the Egyptians and to carry his people on towards Canaan as He had covenanted to Abraham (Gen. 15:13-21). Both these sacraments were notable types of Christ Jesus that was to come.

Now, when the Sinai Covenant was established and all the while it continued in force from Moses till Christ, these two sacraments of the Covenant of Faith were not abrogated and antiquated, but still continued of use and force in the Church of God so long as this Covenant administration continued. Yea, they were pressed and charged upon God's people by this Sinai Covenant under Moses (Jn. 7:22-23 ff.; Lev. 23:4-9; Dt. 16:1-9).

Consequently, this Sinai Covenant, being confirmed and ratified by these seals and tokens of the Covenant of Faith, it must needs be a Covenant of Faith in Christ. For it were most improper and absurd to add the seals of the Covenant of Faith to a covenant of works, a mixed covenant, a subservient covenant, or to any other sort of covenant but the Covenant of Faith.

By these seven arguments (to add no more) it is undeniably evident that the Sinai Covenant was given and intended of God as a Covenant of Faith in Jesus Christ.

(IV) Objections

...urged to the contrary are many, and some of them weighty. Therefore they have need to be removed and answered, as:

Objection 1: Jesus Christ seems not to be promised and revealed in this Sinai Covenant, and therefore how can it be a Covenant of Faith without Christ the peculiar object of faith?

Answer: That Jesus Christ is held forth and revealed in this Sinai Covenant has been already intimated in part, but shall now be more fully evidenced in these ensuing particulars, for:

1. Jesus Christ and his apostles in the books of the New Testament frequently testify that Moses revealed Christ and spoke and wrote of Him:

(1) Jesus Christ witnesses this:

‘Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed Me: for he wrote of Me.’
(Jn. 5:45-47; 1:45)

‘These are the words which I spoke unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning Me.’ (Lk. 24:44)

‘And beginning at Moses, and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself.’ (Lk. 24:47)

(2) The apostles testify this also:

‘Moses truly said unto the fathers, a prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren like unto me, him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you, etc.’ (Acts 3:22-23)

‘Saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come. That Christ should suffer, and that He should be the first that

should rise from the dead, and should show light unto the people, and to the Gentiles.’ (Acts 26:22-23)

2. Jesus Christ is implicitly revealed:

(1) In the preparatory gospel promises of Israel's being to God ‘a peculiar treasure, a kingdom of priests, a holy nation’ (Ex. 19:5-6 with 1 Pet. 2:9-10). For, (as Peter intimates) without Christ no sinners can be advanced to these evangelical privileges.

(2) In the preface to the Decalogue (Ex. 20:2). For, God is not a Jehovah to any as giving actual subsistence and performance to his promises, nor a covenant-God, nor a redeemer from sin and misery typified by their redemption out of Egypt, but only in and by Jesus Christ.

(3) In the First Commandment, for, the Lord alone cannot be had and worshipped as our covenant God, but only in, and through Jesus Christ. Christ is the only ‘way to the Father’ (Jn. 14:6), and ‘without Christ we can do nothing’ pleasing unto God (Jn. 15:5). To this effect [Martin] Luther⁴⁴ said:

‘In the First Precept thou shalt find Christ, life, victory of [over] death, and the resurrection of the dead to life eternal, and to conclude the whole Old and New Testament.’

(4) In the sanction of the Covenant, by the death and blood of slain sacrifices (Ex. 24) shadowing out the blood of Christ the true sacrifice, whereby the everlasting covenant was confirmed.

(5) In the types and shadows of the Ceremonial Law. All the ceremonies were ultimately typifying Christ, variously describing Him, and directly, though darkly, leading unto Him (Heb. 10:1). The ceremonies are Christ veiled: Christ wrapped in swaddling-cloths, Christ, the Son of righteousness shining through a cloud. Christ was implicitly revealed in them all.

3. Christ was explicitly revealed and promised, as ‘a prophet like unto Moses’ (Dt. 18:15-20; Jn. 1:45; Acts 3:12; 7:37) to be raised up by God unto Israel, when they,

⁴⁴ “*In primo precepto invenies Christum, vitam, victoriam, mortis, et resurrectionem mortuorum in vitam eternam: totum denique vetus et Novum Testamentum.*” Luther, in Gen. 22, p. 195, b.

terrified with the dreadful promulgation of the Law, requested for a mediator between God and them.

4. Jesus Christ was the very principal scope and soul of the Law (or Sinai Covenant) in all the doctrines, commands and promises thereof. The Law, without Christ, is but as a dead carcass, a dead letter, yea a deadly killing ministration of death (2 Cor. 3:6 ff.); but with Christ it is lively oracles (Acts 7:38) and the ministration of life (2 Cor. 3:6-9). Christ 'is the end of the Law for righteousness to every believer' (Rom. 10:4). 'The Law was added because of transgressions, till the promised Seed should come.' (Gal. 3:19) 'The Law was our school-master to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith' (Gal. 3:24).

So that in this whole Sinai Covenant, Jesus Christ was primarily intended. Yea, Jesus Christ is more abundantly and clearly set forth in the Sinai Covenant than in all that went before. It is therefore a gross mistake to say that Jesus Christ was not revealed in the Law or Sinai Covenant.

Objection 2: Faith in Jesus Christ and justification by faith in Christ are not revealed in the Sinai Covenant, for 'the Law is not of faith' (Gal. 3:12), though faith in Christ be the peculiar condition restipulated, and justification by faith be the peculiar benefit promised in the Covenant of Faith. And the apostle tells us that faith was revealed afterwards, after the Law. How then can the Sinai Covenant be a Covenant of Faith in Jesus Christ?

Answer: This objection somewhat borders on the former. Both of them arise from the misunderstanding, or non-understanding, of God's mysterious administration of the Sinai Covenant, as has been showed.

1. Consequently, faith in Jesus Christ and justification by faith in Him, must be necessarily implied in the same Covenant. For these, Christ and saving faith, Christ and justification by faith, have an inseparable connection and dependence one upon the other, as the act and object, as the cause and effect. Where Christ is revealed for life and justification, there faith in Him is implicitly required. And where Christ is received by faith, there justification by faith must infallibly ensue.

2. Saving faith in Christ is implicitly commanded in the affirmative of the First Commandment, of having the Lord alone for our covenant God, and worshipping him

accordingly. For God cannot be had or worshipped acceptably without faith in Christ: this faith only: 'purifying the heart' (Acts 15:9); this faith only: 'working by love' (Gal. 5:6); this faith only: 'pleasing God' (Heb. 11:6).

3. The Sinai Covenant did directly lead Israel from all opinion of justification by works to God's true and only way of justification by faith in Christ alone; and consequently it did eminently reveal justification by faith:

(1) The Sinai Covenant was so dispensed as to drive men quite away from all vain opinion and hope of justification by works. This is plain, for:

A. The Sinai Covenant or Law required such exactness and perfection of obedience (Dt. 27:26; Rom. 8:3; Gal. 3:21) as absolutely surpassed every mere man's ability since the Fall. Therefore, it could not justify, 'being weak through the flesh'. Supposing man's Fall, it required mere impossibilities. This could work nothing but despair.

B. The Sinai Covenant or Law most accurately discovered sin in all its kinds, degrees, and aggravations, together with the curse due thereunto (Rom. 3:20; 5:20). It thereby let them see that by the works of the Law only condemnation (not at all justification) could be expected (Rom. 4:15; Gal. 3:10).

C. The Sinai Covenant was promulgated so terribly that the people 'could not' (of themselves, without a mediator) 'endure that which was commanded' (Ex. 20:22 ff. with Heb. 12:20), much less fulfil it or be justified by doing that which was commanded.

D. Presently after the Sinai Covenant was established and before Moses was come down out of the mount, the people 'broke the covenant' by gross idolatry (which Moses signified 'by breaking the two tables in their sight beneath the mount,' Ex. 32). Hereby God would experimentally convince them of how impossible it was for them exactly to fulfil the Law or to be justified by the works thereof.

(2) On the other hand, the Sinai Covenant was so dispensed as to draw and direct man unto God's only way of justification by faith in Jesus Christ, for:

A. To this end the Law, or Sinai Covenant, did convince of sin and 'concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe' (Gal. 3:22). What promise? Understand [by the word 'promise'] a metonymy⁴⁵ of the containing for the [thing] contained: the promised blessing of Abraham, righteousness, life, salvation, and inheritance. The Law shuts all up under sin that righteousness and happiness may not be had or expected by doing, but by believing.

B. To this end also 'the Law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ' (Gal. 3:24), by correcting and directing us that we might be justified by faith (Rom. 10:2-4), Christ being the righteousness of God and the perfective end of the Law for righteousness to everyone that believes. All the discoveries of Christ in this dispensation tend to set forth righteousness and life by faith in Christ alone: Christ was the true Ark, having the Covenant and Law of God fully in his heart and bowels; Christ was the true Mercy-seat, covering the curse of the Law; Christ was the true Sacrifice, purging away sin and making atonement by his own blood; Christ was the true Table of Showbread, whereon all his Israel are daily presented as acceptable before the Lord; Christ was the true Veil, which by being rent we have open entrance made into the Holy of Holies, heaven itself, etc.

C. Paul himself derives and proves the righteousness of faith from this Sinai Covenant as contained therein and revealed thereby:

'But the righteousness which is of faith speaks on this wise, Say not in thine heart, who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above) Or who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead) But what says it? The word is near thee, even in thy mouth, and in thine heart: that is, the word of faith which we preach, That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.' (Rom. 10:6-11)

From where had Paul this description of the righteousness of faith, but from Moses describing the Law or Sinai Covenant (Dt. 30:12-15)? And Paul

⁴⁵ [a figure of speech that consists of the use of the name of one object or concept for that of another to which it is related, or of which it is a part]

excellently expounds the words of Moses as peculiarly intending to set forth the righteousness of faith. We cannot wish a better commentator.

To speak the truth, since the Fall of man, God from the foundation of the world never justified any person any other way but only by faith in Jesus Christ. This Clement, in that renowned and almost apostolic epistle [letter] testifies:⁴⁶

‘We also being called by his will in Christ Jesus, are not justified by ourselves, nor by our own wisdom, or understanding, or godliness, or works which we have wrought in holiness of heart; but by faith, by which the omnipotent God has justified all from the beginning. To whom be glory forever, and ever, Amen.’

4. Whereas Paul elsewhere says ‘the Law is not of faith’ (that is, sets not forth the righteousness of faith, Gal. 3:12), to this I answer three things, namely:

(1) That this cannot be meant of the Law absolutely taken (for then, you see, Paul should contradict himself, who proves the righteousness of faith from the Law, as revealed therein), but it must needs be intended of the Law in some limited and restrictive sense.

(2) This cannot be meant of the Law taken more generally and complexly, as for the whole Sinai Covenant as dispensed by Moses. For in this sense the Law is of faith, principally intending justification by faith in Christ (as has been proved).

But it may be intended of the Law more strictly and abstractly taken, for the mere perceptive [commanding] part of the Law, as declarative of and in substance one with the Law of Nature in Adam's heart, and as abstracted from Moses' administration thereof, in which sense the carnal Jews and legal justitaries [legalists] did most usually take the Law. And in this sense the Law is not of faith, nor did it hold forth the righteousness of faith in Christ.

(3) If it should be urged that Paul saying, ‘the Law is not of faith’, intends the Law in its latitude as dispensed by Moses, because he adds the tenor of the Law out of Moses, ‘but the man that does them shall live in them’ (Gal. 3:12), and [therefore] he means not the Law in that restrictive, mistaken sense of the legal justitaries [legalists]:

⁴⁶ Clement of Rome, *First Epistle to Corinth*, p. 41, 1633 edition

It may be further replied that this Sinai Covenant was in such sort administered as to press upon them the perfect fulfilling of the Law as most necessary to life and salvation, denouncing the curse upon the least failing, but withal revealing to them that this perfect fulfilling of the Law in their own persons being utterly impossible, He was pleased to accept it in Christ their Surety perfectly fulfilling it on their behalf and bearing the curse for their offences, according to the intimation of the many types and ceremonies in the Law.

By exacting of them perfect obedience impossible to them, it takes them off their own bottom, not to seek for righteousness by their own doing. By representing Christ's perfect obedience and sufferings as a remedy, it teaches them to seek for righteousness by Christ's perfect obedience, through faith in Him.

And this answer I hold to be most satisfactory and most agreeable to the intent of this Sinai Covenant.

5. Though the apostle says, 'before faith came, we were kept under the Law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed' (Gal. 3:23), as intimating that faith was not revealed before, or under, but after the Law, yet his words are not to be taken simply and absolutely, as if faith was not at all revealed till after the Law, for faith was revealed before the Law, as is evident in the Covenant with Abraham (Ge. 15:6), with Noah (Heb. 11:7), and under the Law, as I have formerly made manifest and as Paul himself plainly testifies (Rom. 10:6-11 with Dt. 30:11-15).

But they must be understood only comparatively and respectively, that till after the Law faith was not revealed so fully and clearly. The revelation of faith before and under the Law was so small, imperfect, dim and obscure in comparison of the clear, full and glorious manifestation of faith afterwards under the New Testament, that till then it seemed as it were not to be revealed at all.

Objection 3: If faith in Jesus Christ be commanded in the Law, then faith justifies as it is a work of the Law; and so we are justified by works.

Answer: This follows not at all. It's a false and sophistical way of arguing: Faith is commanded in the Law, therefore it justifies as a work of the Law; or, faith is commanded

in the Gospel, therefore it justifies as an act or work of grace. Both are inconsequent. Here's *non causa, pro causa* [a non-cause for a cause]. More particularly, I say that:

1. Saving and justifying faith in Jesus Christ is not commanded in the Law as the Law is absolutely considered, exacting perfect obedience from a man's own person and as abstracted from Moses' administration. But as it was federally dispensed on Mt. Sinai, it principally intended to lead Israel unto Christ, who is *anima legis*, the very soul and life of the Law.
2. Though saving faith in Christ be commanded both in the Sinai Covenant and in the New Covenant, yet it justifies not as an act of obedience or as an act of grace commanded in Law or Gospel by its worth or dignity, but in regard of that office whereunto God has ordained and appointed it in justification: as it is an organ, or instrument, receiving Christ and his righteousness in the promise. This very point I have already discussed and cleared at large. There I refer the reader for fuller satisfaction.⁴⁷

Objection 4: The Sinai Covenant is opposed by the prophet Jeremiah and by the apostle to the New Covenant and is said to be broken by the people of Israel (Jer. 31:31,32, etc. Heb. 8:8-10). Therefore it is not a Covenant of Faith (which is everlasting and cannot be broken), but a covenant of works which is but temporary and liable to be broken.

Answer: These premises will not bear this conclusion, for:

1. The Sinai Covenant, made with Israel when God brought them out of the land of Egypt, is said to be unlike, or not according to, the New Covenant, but it is not said either by the prophet or apostle to be unlike to the Covenant of Faith.

The dissimilitude, or difference, here intimated between the Sinai Covenant and the New Covenant is not in substance or kind, for in both the Lord says, 'I will be their God and they shall be my people' (Jer. 31:33 with Lev. 26:12; Jer. 11:9), but only in manner of administration and degree. God promises in his New Covenant a greater, fuller and clearer measure of grace upon his people than under the Sinai Covenant, especially in these three particulars, namely:

⁴⁷ [Book 3, Chapter 3, Aphorism 5, Question 4](#)

(1) In the inscription of the Law upon better tables. In the Sinai Covenant, it was written on two dead tables of stone; in the New Covenant it should be written upon two living tables: the mind, and heart (Jer. 31:33).

(2) In illumination, touching the Lord and his ways, which shall be more clear, full and universal under the New Covenant than under the Sinai Covenant, (v. 34).

(3) In remission and obliteration of sin. In the Sinai Covenant, sins must often be purged with sacrifices and could not fully be taken away with blood of bulls and goats, there being in those sacrifices a remembrance again made of sins every year, yea, every day (Heb. 10:1-4 ff.). But in this New Covenant, Christ, by offering 'one sacrifice for sins forever' (that is, Himself), has by that 'one offering perfected forever them that are sanctified', God 'remembering their sins and iniquities no more' (Heb. 10:10-19), so that 'no more offering for sin' is necessary at all (Heb. 10:31).

Thus the Sinai Covenant, gradually, not specifically, differs from the New Covenant. They are both Covenants of Faith, but the New Covenant is every way more excellent, complete and perfect.

2. Though Israel broke the Sinai Covenant by their idolatry, yet they broke it not utterly and irreparably, as Adam broke the Covenant of Works by his first transgression. For God admitted them to repentance, upon their repenting pardons them and renews the Sinai Covenant again with them (Ex. 33,34). Therefore this breach of Covenant does no way prove the Sinai Covenant to be a covenant of works, not of faith; temporary, not everlasting.

Objection 5: John says, 'the Law was given by Moses: but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ' (John 1:17). And Paul says, 'Sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under the Law but under grace' (Rom. 6:14,15). Herein they oppose the Law, or Sinai Covenant, unto grace, and therefore the Sinai Covenant seems not to be a Covenant of Faith or a Covenant of Grace.

Answer: Presupposing the distinction of grace formerly laid down,⁴⁸ namely, that grace is used:

1. For God's free favor (Rom. 3:24; Eph. 1:6,7).
2. For the effects and fruits of God's free favor to us and upon us (2 Pet. 3:18; 2 Cor. 12:9; Eph. 3:8).
3. For the doctrine of grace set forth in the Gospel, especially in the New Testament (Tit. 2:10,11).

Presupposing and premising this distinction, I answer:

1. As for that of John (Jn. 1:17), the intent of the apostle seems plainly this: namely, to prefer the ministry of Jesus Christ far before the ministry of Moses, and [to prefer] the New Testament dispensation beyond that of the Old. Moses, he gave the Law; but Jesus Christ, He brings grace and truth. That is, either:

(1) Christ brings the doctrine of Grace more clearly and fully now than Moses did (Titus 2:11) and the true substance and accomplishment of the legal types and shadows now under the New Testament. For, truth is here opposed (not to lies and falsehood, but) to types and shadows.

Nor was the Law of Moses wholly destitute of grace, Christ being the end and mystery of the Law. The Old Testament was a doctrine of grace as well as the New, but not so fully and clearly.

Law predominated in Moses' doctrine of the Old Testament; hence it's called Law, as if there were no grace in it. Grace predominated in Christ's doctrine of the New Testament; hence it's called grace, as if there were no Law in it.

And according to this interpretation, the Law is not so opposed to grace but that it has grace in it. The opposition is not in regard to different kinds, but of different degrees. Both Old and New Testament, both Moses and Christ, teach grace, but Christ [did so] more clearly, fully, illustriously.

⁴⁸ In this Chapter, [Aphorism 1](#), [Inference 6](#), [Answer to Objection 3](#), pp. 728-729

(2) Or, 'grace came by Jesus Christ,' namely the effects and fruits of divine grace covering and pardoning our transgressions against the Law and enabling us to sincere evangelical performance of the Law of Moses.

Moses gave the Law that taught and commanded what was to be done (and that prefigured Christ and the sinner's life, redemption and salvation by Him), but Moses gave not the grace whereby men should be enabled to perform what was commanded or should have their failings pardoned, nor did he exhibit the very truth and substance of spiritual things prefigured in the Law. But Jesus Christ gives grace to perform what was commanded, covers all failings and imperfections, and Himself is the body and accomplishment of all legal types and shadows obscurely pointing at Him and conducting to Him.

This answer I like rather than the former because it better suits with John's expressions in vv. 14-16⁴⁹ immediately foregoing. According to this interpretation, Christ and grace are not wholly excluded from the Law, for if the Law of Moses directed the Jews to Christ and how to walk in Him believingly and obediently (though of itself it did not give grace or truth yet), [then] it did reveal Christ and faith in Him in some measure, which is proper and peculiar to the Covenant of Faith.

To this effect our modern writers resolve this doubt,⁵⁰ and Augustine himself expresses his sense to like purpose, saying,

'The Law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. Grace, that pardon of sin being granted, what was commanded might through God's gift be performed, And truth, that the observation of shadows being taken away, what was promised might by God's faithfulness be exhibited.'⁵¹

2. As for that of Paul (Rom. 6:14,15), his scope therein is to comfort and encourage the regenerate in their course of sanctification, notwithstanding the relics of sin in them. And this he does from their spiritual condition that they are not (as carnal men are) under the irritation, rigor, curse, and condemnation of the Law, that sin should reign

⁴⁹ 'And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth. John bare witness of Him, and cried, saying, This was He of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for He was before me. And of his fullness have all we received, and grace for grace.'

⁵⁰ John Calvin, [Commentary on John 1:17](#); John Ball, [Of the Covenant, Ch. 7, p. 119](#); John Diodati, [Annotations on John 1:17](#).

⁵¹ Augustine, *Contra Faust. Manichean*, Book 22, Ch. 6, Tome 6

over them, but under the power and force of saving grace that is stronger than sin, and at last will have the total victory. So that this antithesis of Law and grace here, excludes not the Law from being a Covenant of Faith and grace. But this text has been fully opened heretofore.⁵² There see.

Objection 6: The apostle Paul seems directly to oppose the Law or Sinai Covenant to the promise or Covenant of Faith, declaring that if the inheritance be by the Law, it is no more of promise (Gal. 3:18). The Law, or Sinai Covenant, genders to bondage, the Zion Covenant to liberty (Gal. 4:22 ff.). The Law is a ministration of death and condemnation, but the Gospel a ministration of life and righteousness (2 Cor. 3:7-9). Therefore the Sinai Covenant, or Law, cannot be a Covenant of Faith or grace.

Answer: All these particular scriptures objected have been formerly cleared, that they conclude not against the Sinai Covenant's being a Covenant of Faith. Let the reader look back to the foregoing resolution in this aphorism, in answer to the first opinion that this Sinai Covenant is a covenant of works.

Objection 7: The condition upon which life and happiness is held forth in the Law or Sinai Covenant is perfect doing...

...for Moses describes the righteousness which is of the Law, that 'the man which does those things, shall live by them' (Rom. 10:5 with Lev. 18:5; Gal. 3:12). And he denounces a curse upon the least failing: 'Cursed is every one that continues not in all things which are written in the Book of the Law to do them.' (Deut. 27:26; Gal. 3:10) But the condition upon which life and happiness is tendered [offered] in the Covenant of Faith is believing in Christ (Rom. 10:6-12). Doing and believing, works and faith, are two contrary conditions of life. Consequently the Law, or Sinai Covenant, which requires doing unto life cannot be a Covenant of Faith, but must needs be a Covenant of Works.

Answer: This objection, as it is most obvious to everyone that reads the epistles of Paul to the Romans and to the Galatians, so it is in my judgment of the greatest difficulty to be clearly and satisfactorily answered. And yet it is of great consequence

⁵² In this Chapter, [Aphorism 1](#), [Inference 6](#), [Answer to Objection 3](#), pp. 729-730

and necessity to be cleared because otherwise the true nature and intent of this Sinai Covenant, as a Covenant of Faith in Jesus Christ, will not be fully and sufficiently evidenced. Several answers are given; I shall propound them and pitch upon such as afford best satisfaction:

1. Some express themselves thus: that the condition of doing, whereunto the promises are made in the Law, is not an antecedent, but a consequent condition; and that the perfect doing required in the Law so exactly and frequently, is not to be interpreted legally, but evangelically:

(1) This way Mr. John Ball goes, who in his days was a most pious, judicious and shining light in the Church of God. Thus he expresses his notion more particularly in these words:

“True it is, the promises run upon this condition: If ye obey my voice and do my commandments. But conditions are of two sorts, antecedent or consequent:

Antecedent, when the condition is the cause of the thing promised or given, as in all civil contracts of justice, where one thing is given for another.

Consequent, when the condition is annexed to the promise, as a qualification of the subject, or an adjunct that must attend the thing promised.

And in this later sense, obedience to the commandments was a condition of the promise; not a cause why the thing promised was vouchsafed, but a qualification of the subject capable, or a consequence of such great mercy freely conferred.”⁵³

And afterwards he explains himself further, saying:

“These words, ‘Do this and live’, must not be interpreted as if they did promise life upon a condition of perfect obedience and for works done in such exactness as is required, but they must be expounded evangelically: describing the subject capable of life eternal, not the cause [of] why life and salvation is conferred. And by ‘doing’, sincere uniform impartial obedience (not exact fulfilling of the Law in every tittle) is to be understood. ‘Do this and live’; what is it more than this?:

‘If ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me.’ (Ex. 19:5)

‘Blessed is the man that fears the Lord, that delights greatly in his commandment.’ (Ps. 112:1)

⁵³ John Ball, *Treatise of the Covenant*, Ch. 8, p. 133

‘Blessed are they that keep judgment, and he that does righteousness at all times.’ (Ps. 106:3)

‘Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the Law of the Lord. Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek Him with the whole heart.’ (Ps. 119:1-2)

‘Who so looks into the perfect Law of liberty, and continues therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, shall be blessed in his deed.’ (James 1:25)

‘To them, who by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory and honor, and immortality, even eternal life.’ (Rom. 2:7)

Which passages are to be understood of sincere and upright walking and show who are justified, and to whom the promises of life pertain, but not why they are justified. And in like manner, that of the apostle, ‘The doers of the Law are justified’, may be expounded evangelically: Not of them that fulfil the Law, which should be justified by their works, but of them that soundly obey, who are justified of grace by faith, not for their works.”⁵⁴

So he.

(2) But this interpretation (though in itself very pious) comes not home to satisfy and remove the force of the objection; and therefore I cannot acquiesce in it. For, it may be easily replied that:

A. ‘Do this and live’, has something more in it than those other passages of Scripture alleged by him. They may be interpreted evangelically evangelically, but this phrase in the passages objected can hardly be so interpreted:

(A) Partly because ‘doing’ in those scriptures is directly opposed to believing, as to the point of justification and life (Lev. 18:5, with Rom. 10:5; Gal. 3:12). Here the apostle purposely compares the righteousness of works and the righteousness of faith together (says Calvin)⁵⁵ that he may the better show the repugnancy of them one to another.

⁵⁴ In Chapter 8, p. 136-7

⁵⁵ *Commentary on Romans 10:5-6*

(B) Partly, because the curse is denounced upon the least failing (Dt. 27:26; Gal. 3:10). But failings in evangelical obedience are covered, not cursed.

B. This explication does not reach the mystery and intent of this Sinai Covenant in pressing both perfect doing and believing, which that answer which shall satisfy must necessarily unfold, as will afterward appear.

2. Others thus:⁵⁶ that the Law may be considered:

(1) More largely, as comprehending the whole doctrine and administration of the Sinai Covenant, as delivered by Moses on Mount Sinai.

(2) More restrictively, as it is an abstracted rule of righteousness consisting in precepts, threats and promises, holding forth life upon a condition absolutely impossible to lapsed [fallen] man, namely: perfect and perpetual personal obedience to the Law; but denouncing the curse and death upon the least contrary failing.

In the latter sense Paul understands the Law in Rom. 10:5 and Gal. 3:12; and in this sense, the righteousness of the Law stands in perfect doing: 'the man that does them, shall live in them'. The Law, thus taken, is a covenant of works. In this sense the carnal Jews (being ignorant of God's righteousness and seeking to establish their own righteousness) did take (or rather mistake) the Law, and so did the false apostles who obtruded upon diverse churches the necessity of the works of the Law in whole or in part unto justification.

Answer:

(1) But this acceptation [understanding] of the Law ['more restrictively'] abstracts the Law from Moses' dispensation of it, from faith, and from Christ the Soul of the Law, and so leaves the Law as a mere ministry of death and condemnation (2 Cor. 3:7,9). For in this sense the Law was not given by Moses at Mt. Sinai. Therefore the apostle condemns the Jews as

⁵⁶ Peter Martyr, *Commentary*, in location, Class. 2, Ch. 16, Section 8; John Calvin, *Commentary on Rom. 10:5*; David Pareus on Rom. 10, Dt. 3; John Ball, *Treatise of the Covenant*, Ch. 7; Anthony Burgess, *Vindication of the Law*, do also speak to this effect.

ignorant perverters of the true meaning of the Law while they sought to be justified by their own works (Rom. 10:1-12), and shows that Moses himself in the Law taught them to look for salvation in the Messiah and for that righteousness which is by faith in Christ alone (Dt. 30:11-14).

(2) In the former sense ['more largely'], which is more complex and comprehensive, Paul understands the Law in Rom. 10:4, 'Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to everyone that believes', and in Gal. 3:23,24:

'We were kept under the Law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the Law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ that we might be justified by faith.'

The Law thus taken is a Covenant of Faith in Christ Jesus, holding out life and happiness only upon condition of believing in Christ, in the sight of God.

To this effect says one:⁵⁷

"The Law in itself considered, exacted perfection of works as the cause of life. But when that was impossible to man by reason of the infirmity of his flesh, it pleased the Lord to make known to his people by the ministry of Moses that the Law was given not to detain men in confidence of their own works but to lead them unto Christ. Whatsoever the Law teaches, whatsoever it promises, whatsoever it commands, always it has Christ for the scope thereof. For though the Law of righteousness promises a reward to the keepers thereof, yet after it has shut up all men under sin it does substitute another righteousness in Christ which is received by faith, not purchased by merit of works."

(3) In both the former ['more largely'] and latter sense ['more restrictively'], the word 'Law' seems to be used in that passage:

'But now the righteousness of God without the Law (that is, strictly taken) is manifested, being witnessed by the Law (that is, largely taken) and the prophets, even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe.' (Rom. 3:21-22)

(4) This answer cuts asunder the sinews of the objection, showing that the Law largely taken holds forth life on condition of believing in Christ and in this notion it was given in the Sinai Covenant, which therefore is a

⁵⁷ John Ball, *Treatise of the Covenant*, Ch. 7, p. 113

Covenant of Faith. The Law strictly taken requires perfect doing, and in that sense, Moses gave it not, nor is it a Covenant of Faith, but [it is] of works. But yet it does not so fully clear the mystery of the Sinai Covenant in holding forth life both upon doing and believing, which the apostle (in that tenth chapter to the Romans and in the epistle to the Galatians) evidently intimates.

3. I add therefore, for the unfolding of this mystery more clearly, and for answering of this objection more fully, these few considerations touching the Law, or Sinai Covenant, and the condition of life and happiness therein revealed, namely that:

(1) The Sinai Covenant was purposely so dispensed as to tender [offer] life and happiness upon two opposite and contrary conditions, namely: works, and faith; perfect doing and believing (this is clear beyond dispute by Paul's epistles):

A. Upon perfect doing all in the Law (Rom. 10:5; Gal. 3:12 with Lev. 18:5): the curse being denounced against the least failing (Gal 3:10 with Dt. 27:26).

B. Upon believing in Jesus Christ the Messiah promised (Rom. 3:21-22 and 10:6-12 compared with Dt. 30:11-15. See also Rom. 10:4; Gal. 3:22-24).

To deny this, which is so clear, will but tend to weaken Paul's authority, to darken many scriptures both of Moses and of Paul, and to strengthen the objection.

(2) In this Sinai Covenant these opposite conditions of perfect doing under pain of curse and death and of believing in Christ, are very differently required and revealed. Believing in Christ is revealed very sparingly and obscurely; perfect doing very frequently and plainly, if the series of the text be heedfully observed and considered. Whence (as Calvin notes):⁵⁸

"Though the whole ministration of the Sinai Covenant belongs to Moses (to his office), yet that function most properly and peculiarly seems to be ascribed to him which consisted in teaching what the true righteousness of works was,

⁵⁸ [Commentary on Rom. 10:5](#)

and what rewards or punishments attend upon the observers or breakers of the Law.”

Upon which account Moses is compared with Christ: ‘The Law was given by Moses: but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ’ (John 1:17).

(3) Though these two conditions of perfect doing and believing be thus differently revealed and required in the Sinai Covenant, yet believing in Christ unto life and righteousness was therein chiefly and ultimately intended, and perfect doing only urged upon Israel’s subordination and tendency to that believing:

A. Believing in Christ unto righteousness is chiefly and ultimately intended in the Sinai Covenant, is plain:

(A) From all the former arguments whereby I have demonstrated the Sinai Covenant to be a Covenant of Faith.

(B) From the many testimonies of the apostle Paul, declaring Christ, faith and justification by faith, to be the very chief scope and intent of the Law, or Sinai Covenant (Rom. 10:4; Gal. 3:19,22-24).

(C) From Moses himself drawing the righteousness of faith from the Sinai Covenant (Dt. 30:11-15 with Rom. 10:6-11).

B. That perfect doing upon pain of curse and death was urged upon Israel only in subordination and tendency to believing and the righteousness of faith, is also evident, for:

(A) Hereby God brought Israel to see the need of a mediator, and to desire Him, which desire the Lord highly commended, giving them Moses as a typical, and promising Christ as a true, Mediator.

(B) To the Moral Law, the impossible rule of perfect doing, God added the Ceremonial Law, revealing Christ, the object of believing, and the end of the Law for righteousness to every believer (Gal. 3:22).

(C) The Scripture, peculiarly the Law, has hereby concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ may be given to them that believe.

(D) By the Law requiring perfect doing under a curse, they were shut up unto the faith that should afterwards be revealed (Gal. 3:23).

(E) The Moral Law and Ceremonial Law, in this respect, was to the Jews a schoolmaster to bring them to Christ that they might be justified by faith in Christ (Gal. 3:24).

(4) The condition of perfect doing under pain of curse and death, convincing the sinner of his sin and misery, leaves him hopeless in himself, not to trust in his own works for righteousness. But the condition of believing gives him hope (without himself) in Jesus Christ, to trust to Him alone for justification.

(5) The Sinai Covenant tendered life and happiness upon these two opposite conditions of perfect doing under penalty of curse and death, and of believing in Christ, because both these conditions were necessarily required to the sinner's happiness, in the sinner, or the sinner's Surety:

A. Perfect doing of all God's Law upon pain of death was required to the sinner's happiness, because God's Covenant of Works at first made with Adam and with all his posterity in him, but broken by them, cannot be eluded or evaded. They must do it or die, otherwise God Himself should not be just and true. Do it in their own persons they could not, because the flesh was weak (Rom. 8:3). Therefore they lie under the curse and death.

This covenant hereupon (such being the contrivance of God's infinite wisdom and grace) reveals the sinner's surety, Jesus Christ, who alone could satisfactorily bear this curse upon Himself and perform the duty of the Law to the uttermost for the sinner's redemption and righteousness.

B. Believing in Christ is also necessary to the sinner's happiness because without faith his Surety's perfect doing and enduring cannot become his by imputation.

(6) Perfect doing on pain of death and believing in Jesus Christ are so required and conditioned in this Sinai Covenant as to let all men see that the penalty and duty of the Covenant of Works have their plenary [complete and unqualified] accomplishment in the Covenant of Faith through Jesus Christ alone, for:

A. Herein perfect obedience is exacted from sinners under a curse, which obedience is as impossible as the curse is intolerable, unto sinners.

B. Herein Jesus Christ the Mediator and sinners' Surety is set forth as bearing the penalty of the curse and fulfilling all obedience for them most exactly.

C. Herein they are directed unto Jesus Christ by faith for life and righteousness.

Thus according to the tenor of the Sinai Covenant, the Covenant of Works has its perfect accomplishment in Christ, by [his] doing and enduring, all which becomes ours by believing. Thus the Covenant of works is digested into, incorporated with and wholly swallowed up by the Covenant of Faith. Thus, perfect doing is attained by believing.

(7) The condition of perfect doing, being thus attained by believing with greatest ease, unties the knots of many difficulties and unveils the secret of many mysteries, as:

A. How mercy and truth have met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other (Ps. 85:10). This passage immediately had reference to Israel's deliverance from the Babylonian captivity and the sweet effects thereof, but mediately to Christ and our redemption by Him.⁵⁹

In Christ these divine attributes have sweet agreement and accomplishment towards sinners, which without Christ seemed to be in great opposition. Mercy is expressed to the lapsed sinner under the penalty of the Law of works, by giving Christ to be the sinner's surety: Truth is fulfilled, which threatened death to the transgression of the Law, while Christ the Surety died for sinners. Justice or righteousness is satisfied,

⁵⁹ John Calvin [in location](#).

while Christ, by perfect doing what the Law could require, and enduring what the Law could inflict for man's offence, became an odor of a sweet smell to God and peace is hereby obtained for them that were by sin at war with God, to whom by the blood of Christ they are now reconciled. This Sinai Covenant is so revealed that therein all this is sweetly intimated. Lyra,⁶⁰ Field,⁶¹ and others speak also to this effect.

B. How sin may be condemned and yet sinners saved. Sin was condemned in the flesh of Christ (sent in the similitude of sinful flesh, and for sin), and yet the sinner is saved by Christ's condemnation. The Sinai Covenant, detecting sin and the curse, condemns sin, directing the sinner to Christ the true sacrifice and substance of all the legal shadows, who saves the sinner.

C. How sinners are at once justified by perfect doing and by believing: by perfect doing, in Christ's person, to whom the Law drives them (by exacting impossibilities of them); by believing, in their own persons, whereunto the law allures them by representing Christ as the scope and end of the Law to them. Thus, it's no paradox for sinners to be justified in the sight of God both by works and faith: by Christ's works, by their own faith.

D. How sinners can do nothing and yet can do all things the Law requires. In themselves, through the weakness of the flesh, they can do nothing as the Law requires, that is, exactly, without the least failing. And yet in Christ, the perfect performer of the Law, embraced by faith, they can do all things perfectly; Christ's perfect obedience being imputed to you by faith.

This Sinai Covenant, therefore, requires perfect doing from the sinner under pain of curse that it may drive him from himself (who can do nothing), and it requires believing in Christ that it may draw the sinner

⁶⁰ Nicolaus Lyra (1270-1349), *Commentary* on Col. 1, in location: "*Misericordia et veritu obviaverunt sibi. i.e. Simul convenerunt in Persona Christi; quia ex Dei misericordia verbum assumpsit carnem ad complendam veritatem promissionis factae patribus Vet. Testamenti de incarnatione Filii Dei. Justitia et pax osculate sunt, quia Christus in sua passion satisfacit pro nobis per viam justitia: Quam justitiam statim pax suit osculata, quia per suum sanguinem pacificavit ea. quae sunt caelis et in terra.*"

⁶¹ Richard Field (1561-1616), *Of the Church* (1628), Book 5, Ch. 11

unto Christ, who has done all things that so the righteousness of the Law may be fulfilled in him (Rom. 8:4).

E. How sweetly the Law and Gospel do agree in one. They are both digested and incorporated together in this one Sinai Covenant. They jointly conduct the sinner out of himself unto Jesus Christ that he may be justified by faith, not by works. They jointly require faith in Jesus Christ unto justification. They jointly tender [offer] eternal life and happiness, upon believing. They jointly direct believers how to walk towards God and man after justification, in order to the promised happiness. How admirable is this consent and harmony!

In this Sinai Covenant the Law was not administered without the Gospel, nor the Gospel without the Law. They were indivisibly conjoined, and inseparably married together, becoming a legal Gospel, and an evangelical Law; a Gospel full of doing and a Law full of believing.

Hereby God will have us know that neither God nor man shall lose by substituting the Covenant of Faith instead of the Covenant of Works, but rather both shall gain. God shall gain a better observance of his Law in the second Adam than He had in the first, and man shall gain a better righteousness in Christ by faith than ever they had in themselves before the fall.

Thus the Gospel does not overthrow, but establishes the Law (Rom. 3:31), by setting forth Christ the most perfect performer of the Law. And the Law is not against the Gospel and promise (Gal. 3:21-22), but contributory to it, in that it concludes all under sin that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe, so that we may (as the apostle in another case) be astonished and cry out, 'O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!' (Rom. 11:33)

Summary

Thus, I have at large unfolded the third thing propounded for clearing the second aphorism touching the Law given by Moses to Israel at Mt. Sinai as a covenant, namely, what sort or kind of Covenant the Law was which was given as a Covenant at Mt. Sinai. Wherein I have (I hope) sufficiently made it out that the Law, this Sinai Covenant was not given or intended:

1. As a Covenant of Works;
2. Nor as a mixed covenant, of works and grace;
3. Nor as a covenant subservient to the Covenant of Grace, distinct in kind from the Covenant of Grace and nature; but that it was given and intended as a Covenant of Faith, or grace, in Jesus Christ, notwithstanding all doubts and objections of any moment to the contrary.

I have hereupon insisted the more particularly and fully, because:

1. This is without exception the hardest gordian-knot to untie, both in this and all other covenant administrations.
2. This point rightly stated and cleared gives singular light to the whole stream and current of the scriptures (both of Old and New Testament), excellently illustrates the order, beauty and mystery of God's Covenant proceedings, and discloses the true use and intention of the Law thus molded up into a purely evangelical Covenant frame.
3. This Sinai Covenant is much mistaken by very many and but darkly apprehended by most.
4. And because this Sinai Covenant has been a very intricate mystery to myself, having heretofore been not a little puzzled in my notions about it, and finding very little clear satisfaction either in books, sermons, or conferences, though with godly and judicious ministers touching this Covenant expression. Whereupon I am the more desirous to impart the grounds and matter of my satisfaction to others that they also may possibly receive some competent satisfaction with me.

And now having (through the good hand of my God) passed this great rub, what remains will be more easily and speedily dispatched.

IV. Why the Lord from Mt. Sinai gave this Federal Law, or Covenant of Faith, by Moses to Israel

...is the fourth and last thing to be evidenced, before we come to inferences. This particular will receive a quick dispatch as being in effect resolved already. For:

I have formerly declared sundry causes or reasons why God gave his Law to Israel at that time from Mt. Sinai by Moses,⁶² all which are also reasons why God at that time gave his Sinai Covenant to Israel.

For God's Law and Covenant at Mt. Sinai, or God's Sinai Law and his Sinai Covenant, are wholly and entirely one and the same in Moses' administration, though Law and Covenant may come under diverse notions in our abstract consideration of them. Therefore change but the word 'Law' in those reasons into the word 'covenant' and you have a full resolution to the present particular. For the Law was not given at Mt. Sinai absolutely and abstractly as a mere naked Law, but relatively and concretively as a covenant, yea as a Covenant of Faith between God and Israel.

Now therefore, thus laying hold of this compendious and gainful advantage for accelerating my progress in this subject, I proceed to inferences from the whole.

⁶² See before in [Chapter 4, Aphorism 1, Question 4](#) at large.

V. Inferences resulting from the Body of this Aphorism

...thus explained and proved are diverse. Was the Law promulgated on Mt. Sinai given as a Covenant, and that not of Works, nor mixed of Works and Faith, nor subservient only to the Covenant of Grace, but as a Covenant of Faith in Jesus Christ? Then:

(I) Hence, God's giving of his Law to Israel at Mt. Sinai was an act of his singular grace and favor towards Israel.

1. Had God dealt with Israel at Mt. Sinai only in an absolute way as a Supreme Lord and Lawgiver, giving them only a mere rule of life and an absolute Law of holiness and righteousness, without the least reflection or respect to any federal contract with them, this had been an eminent act of his divine favor and respect to Israel above all other nations, that God would so far:

(1) Own them;

(2) Reveal a specimen and representation of his holy and righteous nature to them, that is, his holy and righteous Law;

(3) Hold forth this shining torch of celestial light unto them, for guiding of their steps in the darkness of this world;

(4) Distinguish between Israel and all other people.

2. But that God should at Mt. Sinai give his Law to Israel, (I) as a covenant, (II) as a Covenant of Faith, this was a singular and supereminent act of divine favor unto Israel. For:

(1) God's giving his Sinai Law as a Covenant to Israel, has in it three great intimations of divine grace and favor, viz.: A. God's condescension; B. Israel's ascension; and C. Familiar union and communion between God and Israel.

A. God's condescension to Israel. The highest God stoops so low, as to take a covenant way with Israel: with newly redeemed servants, and despicable dust and ashes; with spiritually enthralled sinners. And will the Most High

stoop in a covenant way to such worms? We read not of his such condescension to the glorious angels.

B. Israel's ascension and elevation towards God. As God stoops below Himself, so Israel rises up above themselves by this Covenant. God's Covenant as a golden chain, draws the creature nearer God; yea, joins the creature with God. This lifts the creature above itself.

C. Familiar union and communion between God and Israel. God and Israel agree in this Covenant.

There's their federal union: God and Israel thus agreed to walk together, God in performing covenanted blessings; Israel in performing covenanted duties.

There's their federal communion: this union and communion is between God and Israel, not as at odds or distance one from another, but as brought near together in love.

Here's the familiarity of their union and communion: a covenant is a cure of strangeness, a bond of familiarity.

Herein God deals familiarly with Israel: God is Israel's, and Israel is God's.

(2) God's giving his Sinai Law to Israel not only as a Covenant, but as a Covenant of Faith in Jesus Christ, sets forth God's most compassionate love and favor to Israel (Eze. 16:8) in many respects. Hereby:

A. Christ is revealed as the mystery of this Covenant, the object of their faith and the author of their happiness.

B. All spiritual blessings in heavenly things in Christ are assured, as: redemption from sin and death, reconciliation to God, sanctification of their natures, justification of their persons, adoption into God's family, communion with God and hope of glorification in heaven forever with Jesus Christ.

C. Faith is required for actual appropriating of all these benefits unto them.

D. The gospel of God bringing salvation is preached to them for their present and future consolation.

“He shows his words to Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel. He has not dealt so with any nation: and as for his judgments, they have not known them. Praise ye the Lord.” (Ps. 147:19-20)

(II) Hence, the Sinai Covenant being a Covenant of Faith, not only revealed Christ, but discovered Him with some further manifestation than did the foregoing covenants.

Christ is the center, soul and life of the Covenant of Faith in every period and dispensation thereof, and consequently of this, which is a Covenant of Faith. And forasmuch as God still rises in his Covenant administrations to greater and greater perfection, beginning with the most dark and imperfect and ending with the most clear and perfect discoveries of Christ and Covenant favors, therefore in proportion this Sinai Covenant reveals more of Christ than any, yea, than all, that went before:

The first covenant expression from Adam till Noah revealed Christ as the seed of the woman that should be at enmity with the serpent and bruise the serpent's head (Gen. 3:22-23). This was [revealed] most obscurely and imperfectly.

The second, from Noah till Abraham, revealed Christ as the water that saves his elect in the ark of the church from destruction with the ungodly (Gen. 6:17-18 ff. with 1 Pet. 3:20-21). This was [revealed] somewhat more clearly.

The third, from Abraham till Moses, revealed Christ as the primary and eminent seed of Abraham according to the flesh, in whom all the families of the earth should be blessed (Gen. 12:3 ff.). This was [revealed] yet more clearly and perfectly.

But the fourth, from Moses till David (yea, till Christ the true David), which is this Sinai Covenant, revealed Christ much more clearly and fully than all the foregoing dispensations. Take these few instances for demonstration hereof. The Sinai Covenant reveals Christ: 1. In his more particular descent; 2. In his person; 3. In his office; 4. In his states wherein he executed his office.

1. In his more particular descent. Not only as the seed of the woman, nor only as the seed of Abraham, but as the seed of Israel. ‘The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me’

(Dt. 18:15 with Acts 3:22; 7:37), said Moses to the people Israel. This prophet the New Testament interprets to be Christ.

2. In his person and natures constituting his person, that He should be God-man, God manifested in the flesh, God dwelling in the tabernacle of flesh.

The tabernacle, wherein God dwelt between the cherubims and whereby He visibly testified his presence in the midst of Israel (Ex. 25:8,21-22; Num. 7:19; 1 Sam. 4:4) was a type of Christ's tabernacle and temple of the flesh (or human nature), wherein the fullness of the Godhead dwelt bodily (that is, personally). (Heb. 8:2; 9:11-12; Jn. 2:19,21; Col. 2:9,10; Jn. 1:14) 'The Word was made flesh and tabernacled amongst us,' as the Greek [of Jn. 1:14] signifies. Hence it is that his flesh is sometimes called, 'the tabernacle', sometimes, 'the temple', in reference to the personal inhabitation of the Godhead therein.

In like sort, the Godhead and manhood of Christ were shadowed out by the altar and the sacrifices offered up thereon. The altar was anointed, dedicated, sanctified to be most holy, that it might sanctify the gifts thereon, and that whatsoever touched it might be holy (Ex. 27:1 ff.; Num. 7:1 ff.; Ex. 29:37; Mt. 23:19). This signified the Godhead of Christ, greater than the gift and sacrifice of the manhood, and sanctifying the same. Christ is called, 'the Altar' (Heb. 13:10). Christ is called, 'the Sacrifice' (Heb. 9:26; 10:10). And Christ is called, 'the Priest', 'the High Priest', 'the Minister of the sanctuary and true tabernacle' (Heb. 8:1-2). How was He at once the Altar, the Sacrifice, and High Priest? He was the Altar as God sanctifying Himself, the Sacrifice as man consecrated through sufferings, and the Priest as both God and man. For Christ through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God (Heb. 9:14).

In the former covenants they had no such discovery of Christ's person.

3. In his Office. That Christ should be a Mediator between God and man. For, Israel extremely terrified by God's immediate voice and presence, could not endure it, but desired Moses to pass between God and them and God approved their desires (Ex. 20:22 ff. with Dt. 5:22 to the end; 18:15-20). And so the Law was ordained in the hand of a mediator (Gal. 3:19), namely, Moses. In which mediatorial office Moses typified Christ the true Mediator, as God's promising Christ (the Prophet like Moses) at the same time intimates (Dt. 18:15-

20). Nor did this Covenant set out Christ only as a mediator more generally, but it also delineated his mediatorial office in the chief branches of it particularly namely: (1) Prophecy, (2) Priesthood, and (3) Kingship.

(1) Christ's prophetic function: In that He is promised to be a prophet like unto Moses (Dt. 18:18), in whose mouth God would put his words, and He should speak to them all that God should command Him. As a prophet He should reveal the whole will of God for their salvation.

(2) Christ's Priesthood: In that He is a great High Priest (Heb. 1:14-15; 8:1-3; 9:7-12 ff.) typified by the Levitical Priesthood, especially by the high priest. The principal acts of Christ's Priesthood were these:

A. Expiation, or purging away of the sins of his elect by his own death and blood, by the sacrifice once for all, whereby He of Himself fully satisfied his Father's justice (Heb. 9:14; 10:10,12-14). This was typified in all the bloody sacrifices offered by the priests in the time of the Law (Heb. 10:1-19; 9:6 to the end).

B. Ascension and entrance into the true Holy of Holies, heaven itself, through his own blood, by a new and living way which He has consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh rent and crucified. This was foreshadowed by the high priests entering once a year into the Holy of Holies through the veil with the blood of others (Heb. 9:7-12,24-25; 10:19-20).

C. Intercession for his elect at God's right hand. He ever lives to make intercession for us (Heb. 7:25). 'Christ is entered into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us' (Heb. 9:24). 'We have an advocate with the Father Jesus Christ the righteous' (1 Jn. 2:1). This was prefigured out by the high priest's burning a perpetual incense morning and evening upon the golden altar for incense before the veil, by the ark of the testimony before the mercy-seat (Ex. 30:1-11).

D. Benediction of his people. Christ 'has redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us, that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith' (Gal. 3:13-14).

And Peter tells the Jews also, 'Unto you first, God having raised up his son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.' (Acts 3:26) This was foretyped in the priests blessing the people in the name of the Lord (Dt. 10:8; 21:5), the form of which blessing was prescribed to them (Num. 6:23-27).

(3) Christ's kingship also, whereby He gathers, governs and protects his elect but subdues his and their enemies under his and their feet (Ps. 110:1-3; Eph. 4:8; Lk. 1:74), was also intimated under this Sinai Covenant:

Partly under the type of Moses, who as a prince rescued them from under the rigorous Egyptian bondage by the mighty hand of his God upon him, and governed them as a mighty prince in the wilderness forty years together (Ex. 3:10; Ps. 77:20).

'Moses commanded us a Law, even the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob. And he was king in Jeshurun when the heads of the people and tribes of Israel were gathered together.' (Dt. 33:4-5)

Partly, under the type of Joshua, who subdued the kings and nations that were enemies to Israel, and settled them in the promised rest of the land of Canaan (Heb. 4; Jn. 12:7 ff.).

Partly under the type of king David who completed the victories over the Jebusites and other enemies of Israel (Hos. 3:5; 2 Sam 5-9).

Thus the Sinai Covenant revealed Christ in his mediatorial office, as Prophet, Priest and King. As Prophet He was revealed and promised presently upon the promulgation of the Law Moral (Dt. 18:18). As Priest He was revealed and shadowed out in the Law Ceremonial. And as King He governed the commonwealth of Israel by the Law Judicial, till that outward polity was swallowed up in the spiritual Kingdom of Jesus Christ under the New Testament.

4. In his two distinct states or conditions of humiliation and exaltation, wherein He executed his mediatorial office. The Sinai Covenant set forth Christ:

(1) In his humiliation (Lk. 24:26; Eph. 4:9), that:

A. He should become man, and descend of the Jews according to the flesh. 'The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet, from the midst of thee, of thy brethren' (Dt. 18:15,18; Acts 3:22; 7:37).

B. He should suffer death and shed his blood for the sins of his people. This was signified by the death and blood of all the Levitical sacrifices under the Law, they being peculiar types of Christ crucified.

(2) In his exaltation, that:

A. He should revive and rise again from the dead. This was notably signified by the scapegoat. When the high priest was to go within the veil into the most Holy, he was to take two goats: the one to be killed for a sin-offering, whose blood he was to carry within the veil, sprinkle it upon the mercy-seat and before the mercy-seat to make an atonement; the other, to be presented alive before the Lord, to make an atonement with him, and to let him go for a scape-goat into the wilderness, after Aaron had laid both his hands upon his head and had confessed over him all the iniquities of Israel and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat (Lev. 16:3,7-29).

By the former goat was prefigured Christ's death and blood purging away our sins (by which He entered into heaven itself), by the latter [goat], Christ's reviving and resurrection from the dead, bearing our sins far away from us. 'He was delivered for our offences and was raised again for our justification' (Rom. 4:25).

B. He should also ascend into Heaven. This was typed out by the high priests entering once a year into the most holy place, a type of heaven (Heb. 9:24).

In these and other diverse ways, Christ was revealed in this Sinai Covenant more fully than in all the former covenants. And the more we have of Christ in any federal dispensation the more excellent that Covenant must be acknowledged, Christ being the very marrow, center and soul of the covenant.

(III) Hence, God's Israel of old was saved by the same Christ under the Sinai Covenant, whereby the Israel of God is now saved under the Zion Covenant. That there was a Sinai Covenant and a Zion Covenant (that, answering to Hagar the bond-woman, and in the manner of administration gendering to bondage; this answering to Sarah the free woman, and in the manner of administration gendering to liberty and spiritual freedom) is very clear in the apostle's allegory (Gal. 4:22-29). That the Sinai Covenant was not a Covenant of works but a Covenant of Faith in Jesus Christ, as well as the Zion Covenant, has also been abundantly proved.

Consequently, the same Christ and Savior of Sinners, who is: yesterday, and today, and forever the same (Heb. 13:8), the same redemption, sanctification, justification, adoption and glorification, even the same complete salvation by Christ, was revealed in both covenants, though in different manners and degrees. For, this is the peculiar nature and scope of the Covenant of Faith, to reveal sinners' salvation by Jesus Christ alone through faith, as has been formerly cleared in handling the Covenant of Faith more generally.

Now if the people of God were saved by the same Christ both under the Sinai Covenant (which was the Old Testament) and under the Zion covenant (which is the New Testament), hence:

1. All the Lord's saved, under both the Sinai and Zion Covenant, under both the Old and New Testament, are joint-members of one and the same mystical body of Christ. All [who] Christ saved are members of his body. Christ is the Head of the church and He is the Savior of the body (Eph. 5:2,3). He is Savior of none but of them of whom He is Head. He is Head of none but of his own mystical members, which, collectively taken, are his mystical body.

Hereupon all Christ's saved ones under the Old or New Testament, are joint members of one and the same mystical body of Christ. Christ, having reconciled both Jews and Gentiles unto God in one body by the cross (Eph. 2:14 to the end), has made them fellow heirs of the same kingdom, fellow citizens of the same spiritual Jerusalem, fellow inhabitants of the same house of God and fellow members of the same mystical body of Christ, enjoying as saints, not only communion with Christ, but also with one another in Him.

2. Not only carnal and earthly, but also spiritual and heavenly blessings were revealed to the faithful under the Old Testament or Sinai Covenant, as well as under the New Testament or Zion Covenant. For this Sinai Covenant (as a Covenant of

Faith) revealed Christ to them and Christ has fundamentally and virtually all spiritual blessings in Him, and brings effectively all spiritual blessings with Him. Christ is Abraham's eminent seed in whom all the families of the earth are blessed. He blesses:

Primarily with spirituals, as with the promise of the Spirit (that is, the promised Spirit) by faith (Gal. 3:13-14), conversion from iniquities to God (Eph. 3:25,26), yea, with all spiritual blessings in heavenly things in Christ (Eph. 1:3), God quickening us together with Christ, raising us up together, and making us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:4-7).

Secondarily with temporals, cast in as additional advantages to the true seekers of God's Kingdom (Matt 6:32-33).

Therefore, the Socinians do greatly derogate from the rich grace of God to the faithful under the Old Testament, this Sinai Covenant, when they say:⁶³

'that therein God promised to them neither eternal life nor the Holy Spirit, but reserved them as the proper and peculiar gifts of the New Testament till Christ's coming, and that if eternal life should have been promised under the Old Testament [then] the New Testament should not have better promises than the old.'

Answer: The folly and falsehood of this opinion may thus in brief be discovered:

(A) Christ was abundantly revealed and promised under, and in, this Sinai Covenant (as has been showed), and this, as a Redeemer, Justifier and Sanctifier in ordinances for expiation and purification, as a Prophet, Priest and King. Consequently, the Spirit of Christ was promised, for Christ sanctifies none but by his Spirit. And eternal life was promised, for all these spiritual blessings in Christ that are revealed in order to eternal life have an indivisible connection with glorification (Rom. 8:29-30), and are eternal life in the foundation and inchoation [commencement] thereof (Jn. 17:3,6).

(B) God promising Christ under the Old Testament, promised all things in Him, as God performing and giving Christ under the New Testament gives freely all things with Him (Rom. 8:32).

⁶³ *The Racovian Catechism* and Henry Alsted, *In Theol. Polem.*, Part 3, Paragraph 10

(C) God in this Sinai Covenant revealed and promised Canaan, the land of rest (Ex. 20:12); consequently He promised heaven and eternal rest therein: their life and rest in Canaan being a type of their eternal life and rest in Heaven (as has been manifested).⁶⁴

(D) The faithful under the Old Testament obtained eternal life, for:

a. Before the Sinai Covenant, Enoch walked with God and so pleased Him that God took him up bodily into heaven and translated him, that he should not see death (Gen. 5:22,24 with Heb. 11:5,6). And God styled Himself at the bush, 'the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'; and Christ adds, 'God is not the God of the dead but of the living, for all live unto Him' (Ex. 3:6; Matt 22:32). How are Abraham, Isaac and Jacob living unto God, but in their souls, which being spirits of just men made perfect (Heb. 12:23), live in heaven with God? Now if the faithful before the Sinai Covenant, under more imperfect Covenant administrations obtained eternal life, how can eternal life be denied to them that lived under the Sinai Covenant, which was a more imperfect dispensation?

b. Under the Sinai Covenant, Moses was at his death made partaker of heavenly glory, and Elijah was carried up to heaven in a fiery chariot with a whirlwind (2 Kings 2:11). And these two, Moses and Elijah, appeared in glory with Christ at his transfiguration and spoke of his decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem (Lk. 9:29-31).

c. The Socinians themselves confess:⁶⁵

'that all who under the Old Testament worshipped God from the heart and were obedient to Him, obtained eternal life (which they hoped for), although it was not promised unto them. God performing more than He promised.'

Seeing then that the faithful under the Old Testament obtained eternal life, consequently, eternal life must needs be promised to them. For, how should they obtain eternal life but by faith and hope? And how should they believe or hope without a word of promise in Christ, the only foundation

⁶⁴ In [Book 3, Chapter 3](#)

⁶⁵ [The Racovian Catechism](#) and Henry Alsted, *Theol. Polem.*, Part 3, Section 10

of faith and hope to lapsed sinners? Without a promise, faith is not faith, and hope is not hope, but groundless presumption.

E. The New Testament promises are better than those of the Old (Heb. 8:6), not in kind, but in degree, revealing spirituals more clearly, fully, spiritually.

3. The Sinai Covenant (or Old Testament) and the Zion Covenant (or New Testament) are for substance one and the same, though they differ never so much in the circumstance or manner of administration. Forasmuch as the salvation of lapsed sinners (by one and the same Christ) through faith is the substance of them both, the chief matter and scope of them both, though differently set forth in them both. In that [covenant], Christ was set forth darkly as to come afterwards (to the Jews only). In this [covenant], Christ is set forth clearly as come already, and [that] to all nations.

(IV) Hence, the Sinai Covenant intended not sinners' justification in the sight of God by works, but only by faith in Jesus Christ.

Why? For that the Sinai Covenant is not a Covenant of works, but a Covenant of Faith. Had it been a covenant of works, it had peculiarly intended and revealed justification by works, but being a Covenant of Faith, as has been proved abundantly, it intends and reveals justification by faith only in Jesus Christ:

For every covenant holds forth such a righteousness and justification for kind as is agreeable to the nature and kind of such a covenant respectively. This the apostle testifies saying, 'But now the righteousness of God without the Law is manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the prophets' (Rom. 3:21). The Law itself testifies, 'That the righteousness of God (namely, which God has ordained, revealed, and will accept) is without the Law: that is, by faith without the deeds of the Law, so that, 'Christ is the end or scope of the Law for righteousness to everyone that believes' (Rom. 10:4). And Paul alleges Moses and the Law itself, to prove the righteousness of faith (Rom. 10:6-11 with Dt. 30:10-15).

The Law therefore, which is this Sinai Covenant, intended sinners' justification only by faith in Jesus Christ before God. So then, hereupon we may clearly conclude that:

1. The Jews, through ignorance of God's righteousness, ran into a great and fundamental error in the point of justification while they went about to establish their own righteousness by the works of the Law and so come short of the righteousness of God (Rom. 10:2-4). This the apostle plainly condemns in the carnal Jews. And the greatest part of the Jews split upon this Rock, not being able spiritually to discern the mystery of the Law, namely, Christ the end of the Law for righteousness to every believer (Rom. 10:4).

Therefore the gentiles, which followed not after righteousness (that is, not by the deeds of the Law), have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. But Israel which followed after the law of righteousness has not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the righteousness of the Law, for they stumbled at that stumbling stone (Rom. 9:30-33): Jesus Christ.

2. Such teachers, as urged the Law of Moses and the works of the Law upon any of the primitive churches as necessary unto justification, were false teachers, false apostles: not preaching the gospel, but perverting the gospel of Christ (Gal. 1:6-7); not edifying, but subverting the souls of believers (Acts 15:24).

Such false teachers began to creep into the Roman and Galatian churches, whereupon Paul wrote those two excellent and most accurate epistles clearly stating the question about justification and proving justification before God by faith alone in Christ, without the deeds of the Law. Such false teachers also, before that time, came from Judea to Antioch, and exceedingly disturbed the church there, teaching the necessity of circumcision and keeping of the Law of Moses unto justification (Acts 15). Whereupon that famous apostolic synod met at Jerusalem, stated the question for justification by faith, censured the false teachers, and by decrees, established and comforted the churches of Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia in the truth.

And, in like sort, the anti-christian doctors now under the papacy maintaining justification in the sight of God by works of the law, as Bellarmine, Stapleton, Suarez, etc. are false teachers, either mistaking or perverting the true intent of the law in the Sinai Covenant.

3. The law, as promulgated in the Sinai Covenant, was not, nor could be, contrary or destructive to the doctrine of faith in the gospel. For the Law, so promulgated,

intended justification by faith only: 'Is the Law then against the promises of God? God forbid.' (Gal. 3:21) 'Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid. Yea, we establish the law.' (Rom. 3:31)

Objection: If the Sinai Covenant intended not sinners' justification before God by works, but by faith only, whence is it that the whole stream of that covenant runs so much upon works in the commands, promises, and threats thereof, as if life and righteousness were to be had only by doing, not by believing.

Answer: To this I answer, a few things briefly:

(1) Though the Sinai Covenant runs much, yet it does not run altogether, upon doing. It requires believing also, as has been showed, revealing justification in the sight of God only by believing. (Rom. 10:4; Gal. 3:21-24; Rom. 3:21)

(2) The clear revelation of the mystery of faith was purposely reserved till Christ's coming [in order] to be one of the glorious privileges of the New Testament, as the apostle intimates (Gal. 3:23). The Lord therefore (in this Sinai Covenant and before), revealed the righteousness of faith more darkly and obscurely to his infant church under age, but yet sufficiently for their salvation.

(3) The stream of the Sinai Covenant runs much upon doing, and the perfection of doing:

Partly to convince that carnal people of Israel (so addicted to acquiesce in their own works) that they could never be justified by their own doing, because they could not do perfectly without sin. (Rom. 3:20; Gal. 3:21-22)

Partly to force men to seek out unto Christ by faith, who is the only perfect doer and fulfiller of all that the Law can exact to the uttermost. (Gal. 3:21-24; Rom. 10:4)

Partly to let Israel see that sinners cannot be justified unless his Law be exactly fulfilled by sinners, or by their surety Jesus Christ.

Partly to instruct them, that though God intended not their works and obedience as an antecedent condition requisite to their justification, yet He intended them [their works] as a consequent condition and qualification in justified persons as fruits of true faith, and the way towards the attainment of the promises.

(V) Hence, the Sinai Law was Israel's Gospel.

For the Sinai Law was given as a Covenant of Faith and every Covenant of Faith is pure Gospel. What is Gospel, but the good tidings of sinners' salvation by faith in Jesus Christ alone? Now in this Sinai Covenant, Christ is most variously revealed. Faith in Christ is evidently and unquestionably required, and sinners' salvation by Christ alone through faith is frequently inculcated.

How could any understanding Israelite fix his eye upon the tabernacle, mercy-seat, ark, veil, altar of incense, altar of burnt-offering, sacrifices, death and blood of those sacrifices, the high priests and all their holy garments, but in all these he must needs behold very much of Christ and of sinners' salvation by him! The Gospel was preached to their ears, while the Law was promulgated to them. The Gospel was preached to their eyes, while the Law, especially the Ceremonial Law, was executed in their sight. Yea, the Gospel was preached to all their outward, as to all their inward, senses, while the Law was managed according to God's appointment. In the Law how much sweetness might they suck by faith from Christ's person, offices, humiliation and exaltation!

It was therefore Israel's high privilege indeed above all nations to have such a Law, which was such a Gospel.

(VI) Hence, the many misapprehensions of this Sinai administration that have occasioned so many mistakes and errors about this Sinai Law may justly be condemned and confuted, especially that grand misapprehension that the Sinai Covenant was a Covenant of works (and not of faith and grace), as of the:

1. Legal justitaries [legalists], who have in whole, or in part sought to be justified in the sight of God by the works of the Law. The Sinai Law revealing justification, not by works of the Law, but by faith only.

2. Antinomians, who totally condemn and disallow the use of the Moral Law to Christians as given on Mount Sinai, and as in the hand of Moses. They not considering that it was given on Mt. Sinai as a pure evangelical Covenant of Faith, and therefore the substance of it concerns Christians, as well as Jews.

3. Socinians who deny that eternal life and the Spirit were promised under the Old Testament. And this whilst they observe not the Old Testament, or Sinai-Covenant to be a Covenant of Faith, revealing Christ, righteousness, holiness and happiness in Him, and consequently the sanctifying Spirit, and eternal life.

(VII) Hence, they that would rightly understand the Sinai Covenant must look upon it with an evangelical [gospel] eye.

Since the Fall, the Law was never given but in a gospel way. The gospel was still the marrow of it, the mystery of it, the bottom of it, the scope of it. Thus it was in this Sinai Law. They therefore that would pry into the spiritual depth of this Law given at Horeb, they must look upon it with gospel spectacles, they must principally have an eye to Christ there, to faith there, to God's righteousness by faith there. This is the pole star and the compass they must sail by into the port of solid knowledge in the Law. This is the clue that will orderly direct them lest they lose themselves, as in a maze, in the intricate labyrinth of the Sinai Covenant administration.

Thus [the end] of the nature or kind of this Sinai Covenant, that it was a pure evangelical Covenant of Faith, as dispensed by Moses.

The End